
G O S P E L A D V O C A T E S E R I E S

Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON

UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS

FOR THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1958

This commentary is based on the Uniform Bible Lessons for the Churches of Christ

THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL VOLUME

PRICE

Paper Covers

Single copy, postpaid.....	\$1.10
Five or more copies to same address, each, net.....	\$1.00

Clothbound

Single copy, postpaid.....	\$1.50
Five or more copies to same address, each, net.....	\$1.35

ORDER FROM

GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Copyright 1957 by
GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
Nashville, Tennessee

P R E F A C E

There are few activities of the church today which are more important than teaching the Word of God. Christianity is preeminently a teaching religion. No one can become a Christian without being taught; and no one can live the Christian life without being taught. It is God's will therefore that the church of the New Testament be a teaching institution.

As matters stand today, the greater part of the teaching which is done by the average congregation is done in what is usually called the Sunday school, or Lord's day Bible school. This does not mean that all of the church's teaching should be confined to that phase of its work; but since the major part of the instruction is given then, a few words regarding that work is not out of order here.

The true Bible school is the church of the Lord engaged in a systematic effort to teach and study the Word of God, with three great purposes in mind. (1) To bring into the body of Christ those within the membership of the school who should be, but who are not yet, members of the church. (2) To train those who are in Christ into full-grown knowledge and appropriation of the riches which are theirs because they belong to Christ. (3) To send out into the world fully equipped, victorious soul-winners, who shall be living epistles of the Lord to those who do not yet know him.

The lessons which are contained in this *Annual* are designed to help both teacher and student turn their attention to the Word of God itself. A commentary is useful only if it directs those who use it to the Bible itself; and it is the sincere hope of both the author and the publishers that this volume will do just that. The subject matter covered by the four quarters is varied enough to give the users of this book a comprehensive view of some vital phases of the overall scheme of human redemption.

In addition to its value to the teachers and students of the regular Bible study period, it is hoped that preachers and others who speak in public will find in it suggestions for sermons and mid-week and devotional talks. The plan followed in the preparation of these lessons is such as to make it fairly easy to develop sermon outlines, which means that this book may be preserved and used for that purpose long after it has served as a commentary on the lessons for 1958.

This is the thirty-seventh annual volume which the Gospel Advocate Company has published for use by churches of Christ, and the thirteenth which has borne the title of *Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible School Lessons*.

Both the writer and the publishers sincerely trust that this volume will prove to be helpful to the thousands of teachers and students who make use of it throughout the year.

THE AUTHOR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSONS FOR 1958

FIRST QUARTER

Lesson I—January 5

The Message of Hosea Hos. 1: 1-11

Lesson II—January 12

God Forgives Israel Hos. 14: 1-9

Lesson III—January 19

Joel Warns of Calamity Joel 1: 1-7, 16-20

Lesson IV—January 25

Amos Rebukes Israel Amos 6: 1-8, 14

Lesson V—February 2

The Vision of Obadiah Obad. 1: 1-12

Lesson VI—February 9

Jonah Preaches Repentance Jonah 3: 1-10

Lesson VII—February 16

Micah's Vision of Peace Mic. 4: 1-5; 5: 2-5

Lesson VIII—February 23

Nahum Prophecies of the Fall of Nineveh Nah. 3: 1-10

Lesson IX—March 2

Habakkuk Writes of Jehovah Hab. 1: 12-14; 3: 1-6, 17-19

Lesson X—March 9

Zephaniah Prophecies of Judgment and Blessing Zeph. 3: 9-20

Lesson XI—March 16

Haggai Encourages the People Hag. 1: 1-10

Lesson XII—March 23

Zechariah and His Visions Zech. 1: 7-11; 2: 1-5

Lesson XIII—March 30

Malachi Teaches Honesty with God Mal. 3: 7-13

SECOND QUARTER

Lesson I—April 6

Paul Writes to Timothy 1 Tim. 1: 1-7, 18-20

Lesson II—April 13

Prayerfulness and Modesty Commanded 1 Tim. 2: 1-15

Lesson III—April 20

Qualifications of Elders and Deacons 1 Tim. 3: 1-13

Lesson IV—April 27

An Apostasy Predicted 1 Tim. 4: 1-11

Lesson V—May 4

Care of Needy Widows 1 Tim. 5: 3-16

Lesson VI—May 11

A Trust Committed to Timothy 1 Tim. 6: 11-21

Lesson VII—May 18

Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 2 Tim. 1: 1-12

Lesson VIII—May 25

Exhortations to Faithfulness 2 Tim. 2: 1-7, 22-26

Lesson IX—June 1

Paul Warns of Evil Men 2 Tim. 3: 1-9

Lesson X—June 8

Paul's Final Message 2 Tim. 4: 1-8, 16-18

Lesson XI—June 15

Paul Writes to Titus Tit. 1: 1-5, 12-16

Lesson XII—June 22

Christian Duties Tit. 2: 1-10

Lesson XIII—June 29

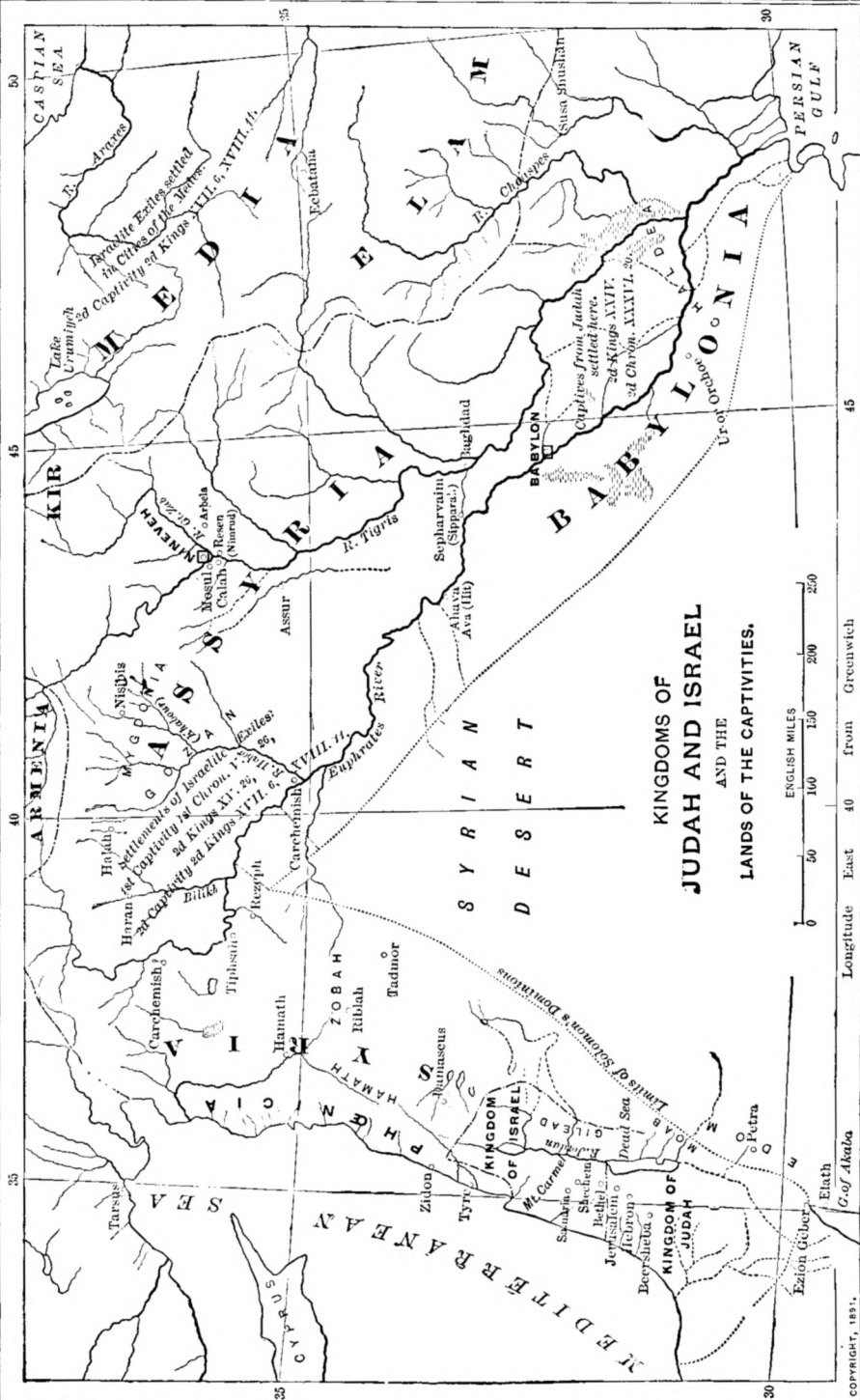
Washing of Regeneration Tit. 3: 1-8

THIRD QUARTER

God Speaks by His Son	Lesson I—July 6	Heb. 1: 1-9
	Lesson II—July 13	
The Great Salvation	Lesson III—July 20	Heb. 2: 1-10
A Warning of Apostasy	Lesson IV—July 27	Heb. 3: 7-17
Rest for the People of God	Lesson V—August 3	Heb. 4: 1-11
The Priesthood of Christ	Lesson VI—August 10	Heb. 5: 1-10
Going on Unto Perfection	Lesson VII—August 17	Heb. 6: 1-10
Melchizedek, King of Salem	Lesson VIII—August 24	Heb. 7: 1-6, 11-17
The Better Covenant	Lesson IX—August 31	Heb. 8: 1-13
A More Perfect Tabernacle	Lesson X—September 7	Heb. 9: 11-17, 24-28
The Law a Shadow of Good Things	Lesson XI—September 14	Heb. 10: 1-10
Examples of Faith	Lesson XII—September 21	Heb. 11: 4-10, 25-30
Things Which Cannot Be Shaken	Lesson XIII—September 28	Heb. 12: 18-29
Instruction in Christian Living		Heb. 13: 1-6, 17-21

FOURTH QUARTER

	Lesson I—October 5	
The Blessedness of Trials	Lesson II—October 12	James 1: 1-12
Doers of the Word.....	Lesson III—October 19	James 1: 18-27
Respect of Persons.....	Lesson IV—October 26	James 2: 1-9
The Faith That Saves	Lesson V—November 2	James 2: 14-26
Controlling the Tongue	Lesson VI—November 9	James 3: 1-10
The Wisdom from Above	Lesson VII—November 16	James 3: 11-18
Warnings Against Covetousness and Pride	Lesson VIII—November 23	James 4: 1-10
Brevity of Life.....	Lesson IX—November 30	James 4: 11-17
Patience Under Affliction	Lesson X—December 7	James 5: 1-11
Prayer	Lesson XI—December 14	James 5: 13-20
Jude, Servant of Jesus Christ	Lesson XII—December 21	Matt. 13: 55, 56: Jude 1-7
A Warning of Evil Men.....	Lesson XIII—December 28	Jude 8-16
Keeping in the Love of God		Jude 17-25



FIRST QUARTER

THE MINOR PROPHETS

AIM: To learn something of these men, the day in which they wrote, and to strive for that holy zeal and courageous spirit which characterized their battle for righteousness.

Lesson I—January 5, 1958

THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA

Lesson Text

Hos. 1: 1-11

1 The word of Je-ho'-vah that came unto Hó-se'-a the son of Be-e'-ri, in the days of Uz-zi'-ah, Jo-tham, A'-haz, and Hez-e-ki'-ah, kings of Ju'-dah, and in the days of Jer-o-bo'-am the son of Jo'-ash, king of Is'-ra-el.

2 When Je-ho'-vah spake at the first by Hó-se'-a, Je-ho'-vah said unto Hó-se'-a, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land doth commit great whoredom, *departing* from Je-ho'-vah.

3 So he went and took Go'-mer the daughter of Dib'-la-im; and she conceived, and bare him a son.

4 And Je-ho'-vah said unto him, Call his name Jez'-re-el; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jez'-re-el upon the house of Je'-hu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Is'-ra-el to cease.

5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of is'-ra-el in the valley of Jez'-re-el.

6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And Je-ho'-vah said unto him, Call her name Lo-ru'-ha-mah; for I will no more have

mercy upon the house of Is'-ra-el, that I should in any wise pardon them.

7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Ju'-dah, and will save them by Je-ho'-vah their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

8 Now when she had weaned Lo-ru'-ha-mah, she conceived, and bare a son.

9. And Je-ho'-vah said, Call his name Lo-am'-mi; for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

10 Yet the number of the children of Is'-ra-el shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

11 And the children of Ju'-dah and the children of Is'-ra-el shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Jez'-re-el.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*” (Hos. 4: 6a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—HOS. 6: 1-11.

Daily Bible Readings

December	30. M.	..... Hosea and Gomer (Hos. 3: 1-5)
December	31. T.	..... Israel's Unfaithfulness (Hos. 2: 1-23)
January	1. W.	Jehovah's Charges Against His People (Hos. 4: 1-19)
January	2. T.	..... Israel and Judah Wrongdoers (Hos. 5: 1-15)
January	3. F.	Samaria Commanded to Repent (Hos. 6: 1-11)
January	4. S.	Rebellion and Sin of Israel (Hos. 7: 1-16)
January	5. S.	Israel's Ingratitude (Hos. 11: 1-12)

TIME.—Probably between 750 and 725 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably in Samaria.

PERSONS.—Hosea, the rulers, and people of Samaria.

Introduction

The last twelve books of the Old Testament are called the *Minor Prophets*. This designation is applied to this group of prophets, not because of their relative unimportance, but because of their brevity. They are much shorter in their content than the *Major Prophets* which precede them in our Bible, except Daniel.

The Minor Prophets are not listed in the Bible in their chronological order. This can be seen by observing the order of the kings under whom the various prophets prophesied. The messages of these prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:

21.) It will be well for both teacher and student to become familiar with the kings of Israel and Judah, in order to have a better understanding of the setting of these prophets and their messages.

The first one of the Minor Prophets, as they are listed in our text of the Bible, is Hosea. We have two lessons from his book. This prophet, and especially his message, has been a center of controversy among Bible students for many years. It has been very difficult for some to understand how the record of his family relationship could be as the text represents it.

But if it is remembered that the whole purpose was to teach Israel a lesson, it will be much easier to understand that the family experiences of Hosea were intended to dramatize by analogy God's dealings with unfaithful Israel. This, in the providence of God, was best done by an object lesson, and it seems that Hosea was entirely willing to do as God commanded him.

The Golden Text

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" This was a sad commentary on those people, and it was entirely unnecessary. They simply allowed themselves to forget God's law, no doubt because they ceased to obey it. That always happens when people allow other things to occupy their time and attention. (Luke 8: 14).

The knowledge which the people of Hosea's time lacked was not beyond their ability to obtain. The text says that they had rejected it; and because of that the Lord said that he would reject them. This should be an impressive lesson to us. (Rom. 15: 4.) No one can become a child of God without knowing his will. "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6: 44, 45; Isa. 54: 13; Jer. 31: 34.)

A knowledge of God's will is also

necessary for one to be successful in living the Christian life. If ancient Israel was destroyed for lack of knowledge, then it is reasonable to suppose that the same thing will happen to people today who reject that which God has offered to them. Peter's testimony on this subject should be of vital interest to all of us. Hear him:

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3: 15-18a; Heb. 2: 1-3.)

The Text Explained

Hosea and the Time of His Work

(Hos. 1: 1)

The word of Jehovah that came unto Hosea the son of Beeri. One of the first things to remember about

a prophet is that he is a spokesman for another. His message is not his own. The prophets of Jehovah were his spokesmen to the people of their day, and the messages which they

were authorized to deliver were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The text says that the word of Jehovah came unto Hosea.

We do not know much about the family life or background of Hosea, prior to his becoming a prophet. He is described simply as the son of Beerī. It appears that he lived in the northern kingdom, that is, the kingdom of Israel.

In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, and in the days of Jereboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. By ascertaining the length of the reigns of these kings, it will be seen that Hosea prophesied over a long period of time, probably a half century or more. We are not told that he prophesied continuously during the entire time of these kings, but the implication is that the period of his work ran concurrently with their reigns. It has been suggested that since his prophecies were dated by the reigns of the kings of Judah, that that was an indication that they were recognized as the legitimate rulers of God's people.

The Tragic Experience of the Prophet (Hos. 1:2-9)

When Jehovah spake at the first by Hosea. This no doubt refers to the time when God's message was first given to the prophet. Some Bible students regard verse 1 as a kind of title to the entire collection of prophecies which are found in the Book of Hosea, and that it was probably placed there by a compiler. But whether that be so or not, we know that God spoke first and the message was then delivered by the prophet to the people.

Jehovah said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom. Bible students are hopelessly divided over the meaning of this statement. Just what did Jehovah direct Hosea to do? Was the woman whom he married actually a lewd person at the time he married her? or did she become so at a later date? Again, was he personally unclean? or did Jehovah mean for Hosea to take a wife from the spiritual fornicators of Israel.

Whatever may have been the true meaning of all this, it seems certain that the events here recorded ac-

tually took place. There is no indication that this was a fictitious story, or simply an allegory. Hosea was directed to marry a woman who was lewd in some sense at the time he married her, or who became so after their marriage. If the language means that she was literally unclean at the time he married her, then it is reasonable to conclude that the same thing was true of their children at the time of their birth. Both the mother and the children are characterized by the term "whoredom".

And children of whoredom. If this means that the children themselves were illegitimate, then they were actually not the children of Hosea, but were born of adultery and presented to him as if they were his own. But if they were his children in fact, then the only meaning that can be attached to the term "whoredom" in their case is that they later fell into that practice, either literal or spiritual fornication.

For the land doth commit great whoredom, departing from Jehovah. This clause assigns the reason for Jehovah's command to Hosea. God's people, who were reckoned as his wife, were guilty of spiritual lewdness, and the experience through which Hosea was to pass would forcefully illustrate Israel's true relationship to God.

If Hosea actually married an unclean woman at the commandment of Jehovah, then the whole circumstance can be explained upon the theory that prophets taught by deeds as well as by words. They frequently dramatized and acted out their messages, so that by their strange and arresting conduct they would attract popular attention and impress their meaning deeply upon the minds of their audience. A faithful prophet would not hesitate to do anything which Jehovah might direct him to do. Hosea was such a prophet.

But inasmuch as Hosea and his wife were to symbolize God's relationship to Israel, it is probably true that Gomer was not a harlot at the time Hosea married her, but became such later, after the birth of their children. This idea seems to accord with the testimony of the record, namely, that Israel was loyal at first and became faithless later. See Hosea 9: 10; 11: 1. Hosea's experiences with

his wife especially after he learned the divine meaning and purpose of it, probably caused him to feel that she had had these faithless tendencies from the beginning, and that God had intended his marriage with such a woman as a means for revealing his righteousness and redeeming love in a most effective manner.

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived; and bare him a son. The name of Hosea's wife is given here, and this is further evidence that she was a real woman and their marriage was a literal union. The context, however, strongly indicates that the marriage had a typical meaning. The text declares that Gomer conceived, and bore Hosea a son. There can be no doubt therefore about the legitimacy of this child. He was not the offspring of adultery, but was actually the son of Hosea and Gomer; and what was true of the first child was also evidently true of the other two.

And Jehovah said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease. Jezreel was the seat of the palace of Ahab, one of the most notoriously wicked kings of Israel, and the scene of the destruction of its house by Jehu. (1 Kings 21; 2 Kings 10.) Jehu had been divinely instructed to destroy the house of Ahab, which he did; but because of his own unfaithfulness, he proved to be unacceptable to God and his wicked deeds had to be avenged. This vengeance was foretold in the name which was given to Hosea's firstborn son. The name itself meant vengeance.

And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. The bow of Israel signifies their military strength or might. (Gen. 49:24; Jer. 49: 35.) It appears that Jereboam II, the king of Israel, was somewhat of a warrior. See 2 Kings 14: 25. The valley of Jezreel was the eastern portion of the plain of Esdraelon, one of the most celebrated battlefields in Canaan. (Josh. 17: 16; Judg. 6: 33; 1 Sam. 29: 1.) The vengeance referred to was probably that which was accomplished by the Assyrians

who brought to an end the kingdom of Israel. (Hos. 10: 13-15.)

And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And Jehovah said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah; for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, that I should in any wise pardon them. This is a continuation of the symbolic significance of the family relationship of Hosea. Lo-ruhamah means "not an object of mercy"; and the reference was to the house of Israel. Their sins had reached the point where there was no longer any hope for the continuance of the kingdom. They had sinned away their day of grace.

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah. The kingdom of Judah is placed in contrast with the kingdom of Israel. The latter kingdom was founded and continued on the principle of rebellion and apostasy from God. (1 Kings 12.) There was not a single king of Israel who did not follow in the sins of Jereboam. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah: he departed not from all the sins of Jereboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin" is a familiar strain throughout the entire history of the kingdom of Israel. This was in marked contrast with the many good kings of Judah.

And will save them by Jehovah their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. The account of this miraculous deliverance is found in 2 Kings 19, and it should be carefully read by each member of the class. When people put their trust in God, as did Hezekiah, they can always depend upon him to bless them; and he does not require the strength and ingenuity of man to accomplish his purposes. "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 28.) "And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 19.)

Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. And Jehovah said, Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. This refers to the final rejection of Israel as a kingdom or nation. The name

Lo-ammi means "not my people". They had been his people (Ezek. 16: 8), but he will accept them no longer.

A Gracious Promise to Be Fulfilled (Hos. 1: 10-11)

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered. Jehovah had repeated this promise to Jacob as he was returning to the land of promise from Paddanaram, and at the time his name was changed to Israel. It was originally given to him when he was fleeing from his brother, Esau. (Gen. 28: 13,14.)

And it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Paul quotes from this passage in Rom. 9: 26 (see also verse 25) and applies it to the reception of the Gentiles (1 Pet. 2: 10.) This, of course, was not fulfilled until after the coming of Christ, so far as the Gentiles were concerned. (Acts 10.) The Gentiles were not regarded as God's people during the Jewish age, but they would be so regarded when salvation was offered to them in Christ.

And the children of Judah and the

children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land. The primary reference here was probably to the restoration of Israel from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, which is graphically described in Ezek. 37; but its ultimate fulfillment no doubt refers to their union in Christ as their glorious head. (John 10: 16.)

For great shall be the day of Jezreel. It is obvious that the term "Jezreel" is used in a different sense here from that in verse 4. The reference here is not to vengeance and scattering, but to planting them in their own land. (Jer. 24: 5; Amos 9: 15.) It describes something of the joy that was theirs when they were again brought into their own land; and the unspeakable joy in coming to Christ is to be seen throughout the New Testament. (Isa. 35.)

The tragic story of Hosea's experience enables us to understand something of the immeasurable love of God for his people. They deserted him and had to be bought back, not as Hosea bought back his wife (Chapter 3), but with the blood of his only begotten Son (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19). The message of Hosea is one of the most appealing of all the prophets.

Questions for Discussion

What is the general subject for this quarter?

What is the aim of these lessons?

What is the subject for today?

What is the golden text? and what is a golden text supposed to do?

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What portion of the Bible is referred to as the Minor Prophets?

Why are they called the *Minor* Prophets?

What do you know about the chronological order of these books?

What does the Bible say about their inspiration?

How are the Old Testament prophets and kings related?

What is there about the Book of Hosea which makes it difficult to understand?

What was the purpose of this book?

The Golden Text

What does the golden text declare?

What usually causes people to forget God's law?

What does the New Testament teach regarding the need for knowledge today?

What usually happens to those who are not familiar with God's law?

What warning does Heb. 2:1-3 contain?

Hosea and the Time of His Work

What does the word "prophet" signify?

Who was Hosea and what is known about his family and background?

During the time of what kings did Hosea prophesy?

How long did his work continue?

The Tragic Experience of the Prophet

Who spoke to Hosea before he prophesied?

What command did Jehovah give to him? and what was its meaning?

Is this narrative historical or fictitious? Give reasons for your answer.

In what sense were the children of Hosea unclean?

What was Jehovah's reason for giving this unusual command?

If Hosea actually married a lewd woman, how can the circumstance be explained?

What did Hosea and his wife symbolize?

Whom did Hosea marry, and what can you say of their firstborn child?

What was this child's name? why was he so called, and what did the name signify?

What and where was Jezreel and what vengeance was to be accomplished?

What was the second child's name and why was it given to her?

Why say, "I will have mercy upon the house of Judah?"

What had always characterized the kingdom of Israel?
 Give a full account of the deliverance of Judah.
 What always happens to those who put their trust in God?
 What was the name of the third child and its significance?

A Gracious Promise to Be Fulfilled
 What was this promise and to whom was

it made?
 In what way did this affect the Gentiles?
 What would happen to the children of Judah and the children of Israel?
 What was meant by the statement, "For great shall be the day of Jezreel"?
 What can you say about the appeal of the message of Hosea?
 How does it illustrate the great love of God?

Lesson II—January 12, 1958

GOD FORGIVES ISRAEL

Lesson Text

Hos. 14: 1-9

1 O Is'-ra-el, return unto Je-ho'-vah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

2 Take with you words, and return unto Je-ho'-vah: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render *as* bullocks *the offering of* our lips.

3 As-syr'-i-a shall not save us: we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our gods; for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.

5 I will be as the dew unto Is'-ra-el; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Leb'-a-non.

6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Leb'-a-non.

7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive *as* the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Leb'-a-non.

8 E'-phra-im *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols? I have answered, and will regard him: I am like a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found.

9 Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent, that he may know them? for the ways of Je-ho'-vah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein.

Golden Text.—"*Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone* (Hos. 4: 17.)
 Devotional Heading.—Hos. 13: 1-16.

Daily Bible Readings

January 6.	M.....	The People Forget God (Hos. 8: 1-14)
January 7.	T.....	Israel to Wander (Hos. 9: 1-17)
January 8.	W.....	Evil Promised (Hos. 10: 1-15)
January 9.	T.....	Jehovah's Sorrow (Hos. 11: 1-12)
January 10.	F.....	Samaria Warned (Hos. 13: 1-16)
January 11.	S.....	God's Judgments (Isa. 33: 1-9)
January 12.	S.....	God's Faithfulness (Isa. 49: 13-22)

Time.—Probably between 750 and 725 B.C.

Place.—Probably in Samaria.

Persons.—Hosea, the rulers, and people of Samaria.

Introduction

The entire Book of Hosea should be read so that the lull connection between the two lessons which are taken from this book can be better appreciated. Hosea has been called the prophet of divine love, and when the full account of his life and work has been considered, it will be easy

to see that the designation is a happy one.

There were two major factors which contributed to the effectiveness of Hosea's message to Israel, namely his inspiration and the bitter experience through which he passed as a result of the unfaithfulness of

his wife. That bitter tragedy did something for the prophet which nothing but sorrow and suffering could do; and that no doubt was a part of the preparation which God arranged for him, for we are told that Jehovah instructed him to "take unto thee a wife of whoredom".

It appears that Gomer, in her downward pathway of sin, had reached the place where she had been put up for sale by her paramour as a common slave, but Hosea did not hesitate to buy her back. See Chapter 3. The tragic experience through which Hosea was forced to go enabled him to understand better something of God's great love for his people. It also enabled him to plead

more effectively with Israel to return to God.

The entire experience through which the prophet passed came to be a kind of analogy of God's relation to Israel. Just as Hosea had loved Gomer with his deepest devotion, so had God loved Israel. Gomer's action in deserting Hosea was analogous to Israel's departure from God; and Hosea's buying Gomer back from the slave market symbolized God's redeeming love for Israel who had forsaken him for other gods. The message of Hosea has been described and the tenderest and most appealing of all the prophets; and for beauty and pathos it is unsurpassed.

The Golden Text

Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone The history of the two kingdoms (Israel and Judah) shows that Israel was the first to fall. The message of Hosea seems to have been addressed principally to Israel, but it is certain that Judah was also included. Israel, it seems, had gone further into idolatry at the time of Hosea's prophecy than had Judah, and this no doubt accounts for the difference in the tone of the address to the two kingdoms.

Just as the title of the southern kingdom was taken from the name of the leading tribe—Judah, just so the title of the northern kingdom got its name from the most influential tribe in that domain, Ephraim. There were two tribes in the southern kingdom, Judah and Benjamin. The remaining ten tribes made up the northern kingdom.

It appears that Israel (Ephraim) had gone so far into idolatry as to be irreclaimable. They were therefore to suffer the consequences of their vicious conduct. To be "joined"

to idols was to be glued to them—to be incorporated with false gods. They had forsaken the God who had redeemed them from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and had gone after the gods who could in no wise benefit them, and now they must suffer the consequences of their folly; they must go into Assyrian captivity.

This is an important lesson for us. It is easy for people today to forget the God who saved them from sin and seek the false gods of our day, namely, pleasures, ease, and material gain. Jesus gave a wonderful lesson on this question in Matt. 6: 24-34. This passage should be read frequently by everyone today. Israel's folly in forsaking Jehovah is a forceful illustration of Paul's teaching in Gal. 6: 7, 8. People are going to reap what they sow (Hos. 8: 7); and since Israel chose evil instead of good, they must suffer the consequences. It is a terrible thing for God to say, "Let him alone!" Read Heb. 10: 26-31.

The Text Explained

The Call to Repentance and Its

Fruits

(Hos. 14: 1-3)

O *Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.* This is Hosea's stirring call to repentance. He had denounced Israel's sins in terms which were most severe, but he never intimated that God's judgment upon them would be

their complete undoing. They would have to suffer for their sins by going into Assyrian captivity, but that would not be their final end. God would punish them, but he would not completely destroy them.

This inspired prophet plainly taught that punishment is never an end within itself, but only a means to a higher end. Hosea, throughout

his message to Israel, pictured the "Divine Lover" as looking forward to the day when discipline should have accomplished its purpose and love would find perfect expression. The literature of the world does not contain a more stirring love-song than that which is found in Hos. 2: 14-20, in which God voices his affection for his people who had forsaken him for spiritual adultery.

It has been said, and correctly so, that Hosea was Israel's great moral and social diagnostician because, as a result of his inspiration and his own painful experience, he learned to look upon life and human society through the eyes of love. His feelings were shaped in the laboratory of life, and all the logic of his teaching implies that if a faithless companion seeks forgiveness through penitence and a determination to live a life of rectitude, that person should have the love and protection of the injured one. Divorce is the remedy for the most heinous of all social crimes only when love and kindly discipline have been tested to the uttermost.

Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips. These words were spoken in glad anticipation of Israel's return, possibly from the Assyrian captivity. They imply a confession of sin and contain a request for forgiveness. That has always been God's method of dealing with those who have gone astray. (Luke 15: 17-21.) No man will repent of a sin which he will not confess. No material sacrifice can take the place of the true expression of the heart. "For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hos. 6: 6; Matt. 9: 13; Heb. 13: 15.)

Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, Ye are our gods. These words contain the confession of their besetting sins; and they were hereby renouncing them. (1) They had turned to Assyria for aid: "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to Assyria, and sent to king Jareb: but he is not able to heal you, nei-

ther will he cure you of your wound. For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver." (Hos. 5: 13, 14.)

(2) They called for the cavalry of Egypt: "And Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria." (Hos. 7: 11; Deut. 17, 16.) (3) They had been worshippers of idols: "My people ask counsel at their stock, and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err, and they have played the harlot, departing from under their God." (Hos. 4: 12; 8: 6; 13: 2.)

For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. Every worthwhile resolution and all true action must be properly motivated. These words show that both their determination and their resultant deeds came from the conviction that Jehovah will be merciful to the helpless. They had become destitute as a result of their sins, and they were indeed comparable to the fatherless. (Hos. 2: 2-7.)

The Divine Promise of Pardon and Renewal

(Hos. 14: 4-8)

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. This is God's gracious answer to their self-condemnation and their determination to live for him. Their backsliding was their apostasy. They had deserted him for the idols of the nations about them; but when they turned back to him he loved them freely. God's love to the truly penitent is always bestowed freely. Man can do nothing to merit it; but if he is willing to turn from evil and serve God, the love of the Father will know no bounds. (Ezek. 16: 60-63; Rom. 3: 24; 1 John 4: 10.)

I will be as the dew unto Israel. The metaphors in verse 5 were intended to show something of the blessings of God which would be theirs. The copious dews which fell in the East served to refresh vegetation in the absence of the more frequent rains which fell in other places. (Job 29: 19; Prov. 19: 12.)

He shall blossom as the lily. The lily is said to have been one of the

most productive plants of Bible lands, one root often producing as many as fifty bulbs. Some varieties grew to a height of three or four feet. Jesus alluded to the glory of the lily in Matt. 6: 28, 29.

And cast forth his roots as Lebanon. The fragrant, stately, and long-lived cedars of Lebanon were the glory of that country. It has been said that their root went as far down into the earth as their trunk went upward. This gave tremendous strength to those trees. (Isa. 2: 12, 13; 35: 2.)

His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. It appears that one metaphor was not enough to depict the redeemed state of Israel. The reviving influence of the dew; the beauty of the lily; the strength of Lebanon; the spreading beauty of the olive-tree which never lost its verdure; and the ever-present fragrance of the trees and flowers of Lebanon.

They that dwell under his shadow shall return: they shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. It is not certain whether "his" in this verse refers to Israel or to Jehovah (verse 6), but in either case the allusion is to the former glory which was enjoyed before the apostasy. To dwell under one's shadow was to enjoy his protection. Grain, in the process of growth, sometimes looks wilted, but as the conditions for growth increase it is revived. The vine reaches the height of its glory when the blossoms are full blown. The wine of Lebanon was celebrated for its aroma, flavor, and medicinal purposes. All of these metaphors were intended to indicate something of the blessings which would come with the restoration of Israel.

Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? It appears that the long captivity of Israel resulted in his complete abandonment of idolatry. The conversion of Ephraim was as complete as it was sincere. The punishment which the Lord sent upon the people for their sin was inflicted in love, and it resulted in their complete restoration from their apostasy. (Heb. 12: 5-13.)

I have answered, and will regard

him: I am like a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found. These are the words of Jehovah to Ephraim or Israel. All blessings which the human race needs come from God. (James 1: 17; Matt. 6: 33; Eph. 1: 3.) Although winter comes, the green fir-tree remains green, and so it is with God: his blessings never fail; and he alone is able to supply all our needs.

An Exhortation to Heed These Things (Hos. 14: 9)

Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent, that he may know them? It has been suggested that as "wise" refers to spiritual insight into the divine message, just so "prudent" refers to practical wisdom. (James 1: 5-8.) "These things" evidently refer to the truths which were delivered by Hosea, the things which concerned the true state of the people of Israel at that time.

For the ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein. These are the conclusions which the prophet draws from the things which he has spoken, and from the general character of God. (1) His ways are right; (2) the just shall walk in them; (3) transgressors shall fall therein. (Psalm 1.)

The Book of Hosea is a remarkable production. The prophet spoke with power and conviction because he stood squarely on reality. He had both inspiration and experience; and he dealt not only with external acts, but with underlying motives as well. He recognized that a man's will is governed by his emotions as well as by his intelligence. This, of course, made it necessary for one to have normal feelings in his heart, if he would respond properly to whatever the environment might be.

Hosea apparently was the first person to combat the double standard which places the entire burden of guilt upon fallen women and allows the men to go free. His language follows: "I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go apart with harlots, and they sacrifice with the prostitutes; and the people that doth not understand shall be overthrown." (Hos. 4: 14.) This, of course, was God's teaching and it

is still his will today. He does not recognize a double standard for his people.

Memorable Passages in Hosea

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, . . ." (4: 6.)

"And it shall be, like people, like priests; . . ." (4: 9.)

"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." (4: 17.)

"For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." (6: 6.)

"Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not." (7: 8, 9.)

"For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: . . ." (8: 7.)

" . . . Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them; . . ." (9: 6.)

"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to kindness; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek Jehovah, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." (10: 12.)

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." (11: 1.)

"Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them." (11: 3.)

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? . . ." (11: 8.)

"I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath." (13: 11.)

New Testament References to Hosea

Matt. 2: 15 (Hos. 11: 1); 9: 13 (Hos. 6: 6); Rom. 9: 25 (Hos. 2: 23); Rom. 9: 26 (Hos. 1: 10); 1 Cor. 15: 55 (Hos. 13: 14); 2 Cor. 6: 18 (Hos. 1: 10).

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?

What is the golden text?

Give the time, place, and persons.

Introduction

How long did it take you to read the Book of Hosea?

What designation has been applied to Hosea? and why?

What two factors contributed to Hosea's effectiveness as a teacher?

What did his tragic experience do for him?

What happened to Gomer which made it necessary for Hosea to buy her back?

How did this experience affect Hosea's understanding of God's love for his people?

In what way has the message of Hosea been described?

The Golden Text

Which of the two kingdoms (Israel and Judah) was the first to fall and why?

Why was the northern kingdom referred to as Ephraim? and who was he?

How many tribes were in each kingdom?

What did it mean to be "joined to idols"?

Is it possible for people today to have a similar experience? Give reasons for your answer.

What immutable law of God applies here?

What is implied in God's saying, "Let him alone"?

Discuss Heb. 10:26-31.

The Call to Repentance and Its Fruits

How did Hosea call the people to repentance?

What was to be the nature and purpose of their punishment for sin?

What can you say of the love-song of Hosea 2:14-20?

Why was Hosea such an effective diagnostician?

What does the logic of this message teach regarding those who suffer injury when the marriage vow is broken?

When is divorce the remedy for this sin?

What is the meaning and significance of the expression "Take with you words"?

Does this principle apply to people today? Why?

What use did Jesus make of the statement to Hosea 6:6? and what lesson did the Lord mean to teach?

What were three of Ephraim's besetting sins? and what did he do about them?

What motive prompted this action? and why is a motive always necessary in such cases?

The Divine Promise of Pardon and Renewal

What was God's gracious answer to their penitence and determination to serve him?

How is the love of God bestowed upon sinners? and why?

What was the significance of the three metaphors in verse 5?

Why were so many metaphors used to describe the redeemed state of Israel?

What did it mean to dwell under one's shadow?

What was Ephraim's attitude toward idols? and why?

How should people in this life regard the punishment of the Lord? Give reasons for your answer.

What was Jehovah's answer to Ephraim's renunciation of idolatry?

What is the source of all our blessings and why?

An Exhortation to Heed These Things
To what did the terms "wise" and "prudent" refer?

What are we taught to do regarding wisdom?

What did "these things" include?

What was said regarding the ways of Jehovah?

Why is the Book of Hosea such a remarkable production?

What emphasis did he place upon the emotions of men?

What did he teach regarding a double standard for men and women?

What are some of the memorable passages in this prophecy?

What New Testament references were made to Hosea?

Lesson III—January 19, 1958

JOEL WARNS OF CALAMITY

Lesson Text

Joel 1: 1-7, 16-20

1 The word of Je-ho'-vah that came to Jo'-el the son of Pe-thu'-el.

2 Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or in the days of your fathers?

3 Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

4 That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and wail, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number: his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the jaw-teeth of a lioness.

7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

17 The seeds rot under their clods: the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down: for the grain is withered.

18 How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

19 O Je-ho'-vah, to thee do I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

20 Yea, the beasts of the field pant unto thee; for the water brooks are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Golden Text.—*"Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice; for Jehovah hath done great things."* (Joel. 2: 21.)

Devotional Reading.—Joel 1: 8-15.

Daily Bible Readings

January 13. M..... Isaiah Promises Peace (Isa. 2: 1-4)
January 14. T..... The Ransomed of Jehovah (Isa. 35: 1-10)
January 15. W..... The New Covenant (Jer. 31: 31-37)
January 16. T..... The House of God (Mic. 4: 1-3)
January 17..... F. A Day of Blessing (Joel 2: 19-29)
January 18. S..... Fulfillment of Prophecy (Acts 2: 1-13)
January 19. S..... "The Valley of Decision" (Joel 3: 11-21)

Time.—Probably between 875 and 845 B.C.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Joel and the people of Judah.

Introduction

Joel has been called the prophet of desolation" and promise, and one needs only to read the entire book in order to see the truthfulness of

that statement. The book which bears this prophet's name is a short one, with only three chapters and seventy-three verses. But every

reader of the New Testament knows that Joel was one of the prophets of the Old Testament, because of Peter's quotation from his prophecy in the second chapter of Acts.

The word "Joel" means *Jehovah is God*. The name apparently was a common one, since it was borne by several other Bible characters. Beyond the title of his prophecy (1: 1), there is no historical data regarding the identity of this Joel. All the information we have concerning him and his work as a prophet is based on inferences gathered from his prophecy. There is no mention of the prophet Joel in the Old Testament outside the book which bears his name.

One would gather from 2: 15-17 that Joel probably prophesied in or near Jerusalem. It is possible that he was a native of Judah. It appears that his entire prophecy was directed to the southern kingdom. The time of Joel's work is not known with any degree of definiteness. Bible students have long been in dispute regarding this question; but fortunately the value of the message does not depend upon the exact time of its deliverance. It was a message inspired of God, and that is the thing that counts.

The prophecy of Joel was called forth by a national calamity, namely, an invasion of the land by a dev-

astating plague of locusts and other destructive forces. This was followed by a famine which resulted in poverty and misery. Two incidents are mentioned in the text which give a graphic picture of the distress to which the people were reduced. One, the daily offerings of the temple which united the people with God had to be given up. "The meal-offering and the drink-offering are cut off from the house of Jehovah; the priests, Jehovah's ministers, mourn." (1: 9.)

The other incident is mentioned in 3: 3, 6: "And have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink . . . and have sold the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem unto the sons of the Grecians, that they may remove them far from their border." Instead of paying a harlot in money for her prostitution, they gave her a Jewish captive for a slave, and a girl was exchanged for wine. The wretched circumstances in which the Jews found themselves were such as to make it possible for the Philistines to sell them to the Grecians for slaves, so that they could be removed far from their homeland with no hope of return. It was against this kind of a background that Joel delivered his prophecy.

The Golden Text

The golden text must be understood in the light of the context, especially that of Chapter 2. Verses 1-11 continue the description of the terrible visitation which was to come upon the land. Bible students are not agreed regarding this army of invaders. Some are inclined to think that only literal locusts were meant, which is very probable, while others are of the opinion that the locusts typified an invading army of soldiers, such as the Chaldeans. It is possible that both the locusts and the army were meant, the locusts coming first and prefiguring the army which came later.

But so far as the lesson itself is concerned, it makes little difference which was meant. In either case the land was practically destroyed, so far as its fertility was concerned,

and the people were reduced to misery and degradation. However, if we could be sure about the language, that is, whether it was literal or figurative, we would have a better idea about the time of Joel's prophecy, that is, whether it was before or after the captivity. But since we cannot be certain about it, the time element must remain in the realm of probability which, as we have already indicated, is only of relative importance.

Verses 12-14 contain a call to fasting and mourning, while verses 15-17 name the conditions which must be met, if they are to have God's blessings. The calamities which would come upon them would create a situation which called for the sure word of God, and Joel, as his spokesman, was sent to proclaim that word. It

was a dark hour and they must have guidance which would direct them to light and liberty.

Jehovah's gracious answer to their prayer is found in verses 18-20. The Lord has never turned his back upon his people when they turned to him in true penitence. Compare Solomon's prayer as the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings 8: 22ff. The golden text, "*Fear not, O land, be glad and*

rejoice; for Jehovah hath done great things," is the beginning of a paragraph (Verses 21-27) which was designed to give them confidence. These verses contain God's promise of material blessings, and they are followed by the great prediction of spiritual blessings which began to be fulfilled on the Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. (Acts 2: 16-21.)

The Text Explained

The Army of Devastation

(Joel 1: 1-4)

The word of Jehovah that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. These words may be regarded as a kind of title to the book which bears the name of this prophet. Their significance is to be found in the fact that they affirmed that Joel's commission was a divine one. "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1: 21.)

The occasion for this prophecy was an invasion of the country, probably the land of Judah, by an army of locusts and other destructive agencies, followed by a drought of unusual severity. A calamity of this sort was not unusual in Palestine, and, under ordinary circumstances, it would not have been made the subject of a prophetic message. But the calamity described by Joel was an exceptional one, and the results were severe in the extreme. (Deut. 28: 36-40.)

A calamity which would lead to such results demanded a word from Jehovah, for it was intended to teach the people a lesson. Joel was the spokesman who was selected by the Lord to interpret the significance of this visitation, and to warn the people of the danger with which it threatened them. The name of his father was probably added to his name to distinguish the prophet from other men who bore the name "Joel."

Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. The old men not only could remember farthest back into the past, but would be the best fitted to judge as to the severity of the forthcoming visitation. "Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations: Ask thy father, and he will show thee; Thine elders, and they

will tell thee." (Deut. 32: 7.) "I said, Days should speak, And multitude of years should teach wisdom." (Job 32: 7.)

Hath this been in your days, or in the days of your fathers? This abrupt beginning, before anything was said about the subject of his message, would have the tendency to excite both interest and alarm by intimating that he was about to announce an event, such as even the oldest men among them had never witnessed, nor even read from the history of the ancient past.

Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. Having indicated the unparalleled severity of the forthcoming calamity, so far as the past was concerned, Joel continued to heighten the effects of his announcement, while still delaying any intimation as to what it was, by telling his hearers that what he was about to say should be handed down to the coming generations. This sentiment had been incorporated in the psalms of Israel, as may be seen by reading Psalm 78. The whole idea was to warn against unfaithfulness to God. These people were going to suffer for their sins, and their children and those to follow should know about it, and avoid the mistakes of their fathers.

That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten. Many Bible students are of the opinion that four species of locusts, rather than four altogether different insects, are meant. (Lev. 11: 22.) If this is true, then the four different names were used by Joel to point out the four different stages of the locust,

from embryo to full growth. It makes no real difference, so far as the meaning of the lesson is concerned, whether four different creatures were meant, or whether the reference was to four different stages of the same creature; the idea is that of total destruction.

The following quotation from W. M. Thomson's *The Land and the Book* is a graphic description of the destructiveness of the locust. "In every stage of their existence the locusts give a most impressive view of the power of God to punish a wicked world. Observe the pioneers of the host, those flying squadrons that appear in early spring. No power of man can interrupt them; thousands on thousands, with most fatal industry, deposit their innumerable eggs in the field, the plain, and the desert. This done, they vanish like morning mist. But in six or eight weeks the very dust seems to waken into life, and begins to creep. Soon this animated earth becomes minute grasshoppers, and, creeping and jumping, all in the same general direction, they begin their destructive progress. Whilst on the march they consume every green thing with wonderful eagerness and expedition. A large vineyard and vegetable garden adjoining ours was as green as a meadow in the morning, but long before night it was as bare as a newly-ploughed field or dusty road. The noise made by them in marching and foraging is like that of a heavy shower falling upon a distant forest." (Vol. II, p. 297f.)

Effects of the Invasion

(Joel 1: 5-7)

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and wail, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine; for it is cut off from your mouth. These people had been living a life of debauchery, and had been misusing the blessings which God had bestowed upon them. But now with this calamity upon them, they are called on to awake out of their stupor and realize what has been done. The destruction of their vineyards would make impossible fresh stores of wine. When people make the gratification of their lusts their chief delight, they will find themselves in greater distress when

those things which they crave are no longer available.

For a nation is come upon my land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the jaw-teeth of a lioness. The term "nation" here evidently refers to the locusts and is intended to indicate something of their numbers and savage hostility. There is also a possibility that the term was also used for the purpose of preparing the mind of the hearer for that which seems to be the figurative locusts of Chapter 2. As already pointed out, there is a difference of opinion among Bible students regarding this question; but it seems more reasonable to suppose that the literal locusts actually came, and that they were the forerunners and forewarners of the invasion of the armies of the Babylonians. (Jer. 46: 13, 23; Nah. 3: 15.) The teeth of the lions symbolized their great power of destructiveness.

He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white. "The references to the habits and behavior of locusts in the Bible are very striking and accurate. Joel says, 'He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.' The locusts at once strip the vines of every leaf and cluster of grapes, and of every green twig. I also saw many large fig-orchards 'clean bare,' not a leaf remaining; and as the bark of the fig-tree is of a silvery whiteness, the whole orchards, thus rifled of their green leaves, spread abroad their branches 'made white' in melancholy nakedness to the burning sun." (Op. cit., p. 298.)

Terribleness of the Situation

(Joel 1: 16-20)

Is not the food cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? In view of the utter destruction which the locusts would effect, Joel exclaimed in the preceding verse, "Alas for the day! for the day of Jehovah is at hand, and as destruction from the Almighty shall it come." Regarding the cutting off of the food before their eyes, Thomson says, "This is most em-

phatically true. Not only large vineyards loaded with young grapes, but whole fields of corn disappear, and olive, fig, and mulberry trees are stripped of their leaves as if by magic, and the hope of the husbandman vanishes like smoke." (P. 299.)

The seeds rot under their clods; the garnerers are laid desolate, the barns are broken down: for the grain is withered. The lack of moisture would prevent the seed from germinating; and the buildings which were used for storing the grain would soon deteriorate. The owners would see little need for keeping them in repair, if there was nothing to store in them.

Verses 18-20 present a pathetic picture of the plight of the dumb beasts in their inability to find food and drink. It has been suggested that there may be a tacit contrast between the *sense* of the animal creation and the *insensibility* of the people. As the cattle in their helplessness and perplexity look for food and water, the prophet interposes a cry, apparently on behalf of the dumb animals, "O Jehovah, to thee do I cry." The beasts themselves are represented as panting unto God, as if they were appealing to his pity, according to their capacity, in their desperate circumstances. It is bad enough for rational people to have to suffer for their own sins; but when it comes to helpless children and dumb animals having to suffer because of the sins of those who

should be their helpers, the situation begs description.

Memorable Passages in Joel

"Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; . . ." (2: 13.)

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call." (2: 28-32.)

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! for the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision." (3: 14.)

New Testament References to Joel

Acts 2: 17-21 (Joel 2: 28-32): Rom. 10: 13 (Joel 2: 32).

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What kind of a prophet has Joel been called?

What do you think of the designation?

Give reasons for your answer.

What does the word "Joel" mean?

What do we know of the prophet Joel?

Where did he probably live and prophesy?

What can you say of the importance of the time element of his prophecy?

What was the occasion of his prophecy?

What can you say of the distress which he predicted?

What use *was* made of some of the slave children of Israel?

The Golden Text

How must we understand the golden text?

Give the general outline of chapter 2 of Joel.

Discuss briefly each of the divisions of the chapter.

The Army of Devastation

How may we regard the opening words of Joel's prophecy?

In what does their significance consist?

Was a calamity of locusts unusual in Palestine?

What made this one out of the ordinary?

What did the calamity of Joel's prediction demand? and why?

Why call the attention of the old men?

What can you say of the manner in which Joel introduced his prophecy?

What was implied in the exhortation to tell their children of it?

Describe the locusts which invaded the land, and tell of their destruction.

Effects of the Invasion

What were the drunkards told to do? and why?

What was meant by "nation" in this passage?

Was there a symbolic significance implied here? Give reasons for your answer.

What did the teeth of lions signify?

What was the extent of the destruction which was wrought?

Terribleness of the Situation

In what sense was the food cut off before their eyes?

What happened to their seed, grain, and storerooms? and why?

Describe the picture set forth in verses

18-20 of the text.

What effect does the pleading of hungry and thirsty beasts have upon you?

How was Joel affected by these conditions?

What are some of the memorable passages in Joel?

What references are made in the New Testament to this book?

Lesson IV—January 26, 1958

AMOS REBUKES ISRAEL

Lesson Text

Amos 6: 1-8, 14

1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zi-ôn, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Sa-ma'-ri-a, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Is'-ra-el come!

2 Pass ye unto Cal'-neh, and see; and from thence go ye to Ha'math the great; then go down to Gath of the Phi-lis'-tines: are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?

3 —ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves

instruments of music, like David;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

7 Therefore shall they now go captive with the first that go captive; and the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away.

8 The Lord Je-ho'-vah hath sworn by himself, saith Je-ho'-vah, the God of hosts: I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

14 For, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Is'-ra-el, saith Je-ho'-vah, the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entrance of Ha'-math unto the brook of the Ar'-a-bah.

Golden Text.—"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Je-hovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say" (Amos. 5: 14.)

Devotional Reading.—Amos 5: 4-15.

Daily Bible Readings

January 20.	M.	Punishment of the Nations (Amos 1: 1-15)
January 21.	T.	Judgment of Judah and Israel (Amos 2: 1-16)
January 22.	W.....	Necessity of God's Judgments (Amos 3: 1-15)
January 23.	T.....	Israel Warned to Make Preparation (Amos 4: 1-13)
January 24.	F.....	Amos Reproves Israel (Amos 5: 1-15)
January 25.	S.....	Lord's Name Not Mentioned (Amos 6: 10-13)
January 26.	S.....	The Mission of Amos (Amos 7: 14-17)

Time.—Probably about 760 B.C.

Place.—Bethel.

Persons.—Amos, the rulers, and people of Israel.

Introduction

Amos, one of the earliest of the Minor Prophets, preceded perhaps only by Jonah, is known as the

prophet of social justice. It appears that he lived in Tekoa (1: 1), a few miles south of Jerusalem. He him-

self said that he "was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees." (7: 14.) His commission as a prophet was a divine one, as may be learned from his own words: "And Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." (7: 15.) The sending of this prophet from Judah into Israel reminds us of a similar incident in the days of Jeroboam I. (1 Kings 13.)

The opening part of the Book of Amos informs us regarding the time of the prophet's work: it was "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." This was perhaps a little while before the time of Hosea's prophecy. The Jeroboam of this period was known as Jeroboam II, to distinguish him from the first king of Israel. It was during the reign of the Second Jeroboam that the northern kingdom enjoyed a period of great national expansion and almost unparalleled prosperity.

As so often is the case, material blessings turned the hearts and minds

of the people away from God. Moral corruption and spiritual decay were soon the order of the day. The people became guilty of almost every sin imaginable—drunkenness, immorality, social injustice, disregard for the poor, defrauding the helpless, and oppression in general. People cannot practice cruelty, dishonesty, and social injustice, and expect to have God look with favor upon them when they go through a form of worship toward him, as may be seen by reading Amos 5: 21-24.

The Assyrian Empire (Nineveh was its capital) had been spared by the preaching of Jonah, and was, about the time of this lesson, preparing to reach toward the Mediterranean Sea in a program of conquest; and it was not many years after the prophecy of Amos, perhaps less than forty, that Israel fell a victim of that mighty power and was taken into captivity. It is interesting to read of the accusations which were made against this great prophet of social justice, and to observe his reaction to them. (Amos 7: 10-17.)

The Golden Text

"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say" It has already been pointed in the introduction to this lesson that the people of Israel had departed from the Lord. It appears that they were outwardly very religious, that is, they were very punctual in performing the various duties at their places of worship; but their pretended worship was formal and soulless.

These people had become alienated from the basic moral demands of Jehovah. They apparently regarded themselves as being indissolubly related to God by nature, and that he would be satisfied with them if they offered their sacrifices and performed the other rites of their worship faithfully; and that on the "day of Jehovah" he would not only glorify himself, but would honor them as well. (Amos 5: 18-20.)

It was against this kind of a background that the words of the golden text were spoken. Amos reminded

them that if they wanted the blessings of Jehovah, as they professed, then they would have to seek good, and not evil. The religion of the Bible has always been an ethical one, rather than simply ritualistic and mystical. (Amos 5: 21-24.) It evidences itself in wholehearted devotion to God (5: 4-6) and in loyal and helpful relations to one's fellows. Religion and morality cannot be separated; we cannot be in true relation with God without being in true relation with our fellow men. (Matt. 22: 37-40.)

Jehovah is here called the God of hosts, an indication of his almighty power. It seems that the people of Israel had assumed, or perhaps had even boasted, that God was with them—"as ye say"—, but Amos pointed out to them that such was not the case. It was necessary for them to seek good, and not evil, before they could rightfully claim God's blessings; and what was true then, is true now; for God's promises are only to the faithful.

The Text Explained

Luxurious Self-Indulgence

Condemned

(Amos 6: 1-6)

Woe to *them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria*. To be at ease probably means that they were satisfied with their lot, and were not concerned with the physical suffering and the moral and spiritual conditions with which they were surrounded. They had that which they wanted, and that was all that mattered with them.

Zion was another name for Jerusalem (2 Chron. 5: 2) which was the seat of both the government and the temple, the center of worship; and the people who were addressed by Amos apparently felt that they would be saved for Zion's sake. And then, in addition to that, there was the mountain or government of Samaria which was strong enough to protect them from physical harm. We learn from 2 Kings 17: 5, 6 that the Assyrians did besiege the city three years before it was taken. These people, then, were satisfied with their religion and the protection which they felt their government could give them.

The notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come! The "notable men" were probably the leading men of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel, or, as in the text, Zion and Samaria. The "chief of the nations" were the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel. The princes and rulers of these two kingdoms should have been alive to and interested in the needs of those who came to them for judgment, but instead they were at ease in Zion, that is, satisfied with and thinking only of themselves, and were trusting for their protection in the political government of Samaria. Num. 1: 16 gives some idea of the former stature, while the picture drawn by Amos shows something of their degenerate condition.

Pass ye unto Calneh, and see. This was one of the cities built by Nimrod in the land of Shinar, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It was east of the land of Canaan. (Gen. 10: 10.) *And from thence go ye to Hamath the great.* Hamath was a

very ancient city, located on the Orontes river, and capital of upper Syria. Something of its importance may be seen from the fact that it is said that Shalmanezar claims to have captured eighty-nine towns which belonged to it. It was to the north of Canaan. *Then go down to Gath of the Philistines.* Gath, sometimes called the city of giants and prominently mentioned in the Old Testament, was southwest of Jerusalem.

Are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border? This apparently was intended as an object lesson to those who were at ease in Zion and who were trusting in Samaria. It is as if the prophet had said, Look to the east, the north, and the west, and observe what happened to the strongholds which are mentioned. They were all conquered and subjugated. Not a single one was able to defend itself. Now, with the sins of the people to whom Amos spoke greater than the sins of these heathen cities, what reason did they have to think that they could escape? Moffatt renders this passage in these words, "Are you any better than these realms, is your land larger than theirs?" God is no respecter of persons, and these self-indulgent people are warned of their own coming fate.

Ye that put far away the evil day. They tried to persuade themselves that the day of reckoning, foretold by the prophets, was in the far-distant future; and that so far as they were concerned, there was no immediate danger. *And cause the seat of violence to come near.* When people live on the assumption that judgment is far away, they are inclined to lives of recklessness. (Eccles. 8: 11-13; Matt. 24: 48ff.) The "seat of violence" probably means that violence is enthroned or given free sway. (Psalm 94: 20.)

That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall. This is a description of the luxury which characterized their living. Their living quarters were of the finest and were conducive to the greatest of ease and comfort; and

their food was of the choicest variety. All of this was for their own selfish gratification.

That sing idle songs to the sound of the viol. The word "viol" originally meant a bottle (a skin bottle when full, Matt. 9: 17) and later a vase of similar shape. It came to mean a lyre, that is, a musical instrument shaped like a bottle or vase. In the case now before us the idea appears to be that they were chanting meaningless words, so far as the songs were concerned, to the music of their instruments. It was the rhythm of their music, rather than the sentiment of their singing which was being emphasized by them.

That invent for themselves instruments of music, like David. It was David who introduced musical instruments of a mechanical nature into the worship authorized under the law of Moses. (1 Chron. 23: 5; 2 Chron. 29: 25.) The law itself made no provisions for such instruments. These people who were at ease in Zion invented their musical instruments for their entertainment, while David intended his for the worship of Jehovah. There was a wide difference in the motives which characterized David and those which actuated the men of our text today. The following quotation from Adam Clarke gives some idea regarding David's authority for his action with respect to the instruments.

"I believe that David was not authorized by the Lord to introduce that multitude of musical instruments into the divine worship of which we read; and I am satisfied that his conduct in this respect is most solemnly reprehended by this prophet; and I further believe that the use of such instruments of music, in the Christian Church, is *without the sanction and against the will of God*; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are *sinful*. If there was a *woe to them who invented* instruments of music, as did David under the law, is there *no woe, no curse* to them who invent them, and introduce them into the worship of God in the Christian Church? I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive

of much evil. Music, *as a science*. I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the *house of God* I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity. The late venerable and most eminent divine, the Rev. *John Wesley*, who was a *lover of music*, and an *elegant poet*, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of the Methodists said, in his terse and powerful manner, 'I have no objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN.' I say the same, though I think the expense of purchase had better be spared." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 684; see Vol. II, p. 690f.)

That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Drinking from bowls, rather than from cups or glasses, probably indicated excessive drinking; just as anointing themselves with the chief of oils proclaimed their luxurious wantonness. Their whole aim was to satisfy their own selfish lusts, while manifesting no concern for the affliction of Joseph, that is for the people, here called after the name of the beloved son of Jacob. The indifferent attitude of these men toward the people reminds us of the attitude of Joseph's own brothers when they sat down to eat in the midst of his afflictions. (Gen. 37: 25.)

Such Impiety Shall Be Punished (Amos 6: 7, 8)

Therefore shall they now go captive with the first that go captive. The princes and rulers, the "notable men" of Israel, those who were enjoying the best of everything, shall be among the first to go into foreign captivity. *And the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away.* Their luxury and self-indulgence shall end with their captivity.

The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by himself, saith Jehovah, the God of hosts: I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein. The former glory of Israel has been so eclipsed by their

sinful living as to completely alienate God from them. He will no longer accept them as his people, but has given his sure word that they are going to be delivered into captivity.

The Victor Identified

(Amos 6: 14)

For, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith Jehovah, the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entrance of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah. The nation referred to here was the Assyrians. They would descend upon Israel from the north, via Hamath, and would continue their affliction to the brook of the Arabah, that is, the valley south of the Dead Sea, another way of saying that it would be complete.

Memorable Passages in Amos

"Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes." (2: 6.)

"Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" (3: 3.)

"The Lord hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?" (3: 8.)

"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." (4: 12.)

"Ye who turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth, seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name). (5: 7, 8.)

"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though you offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." (5: 21-24.)

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, . . . that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David." (6: 1, 5.)

"Then answered Amos, . . . I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; . . ." (7: 14.)

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." (8: 9.)

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah." (8: 11.)

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this." (9: 11, 12.)

New Testament References to Amos

Acts 7: 42, 43 (Amos 5: 25-27);
Acts 15: 15-18 (Amos 9: 11, 12),

Questions for Discussion

Give the subject for today?

Quote the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

How did Amos compare in point of time with the other Minor Prophets?

What was one of his distinguished characteristics?

Under what circumstances did he become a prophet?

What other prophet was sent out of Judah in to Israel?

Who were the reigning monarchs during the time of his prophecy?

What was the moral and spiritual condition of the people at that time?

What opposition did Amos meet in Israel and how did he react to it?

The Golden Text

What was the admonition of this Golden Text? and why was it necessary?

What seemed to be the attitude which the people assumed?

Name a distinguishing characteristic of

the religion of the Bible, and show why it is true now as well as then.
 What is the meaning of "the God of hosts"?
 What is the implication of "as ye say"?

Luxurious Self-Indulgence Condemned
 Who were at ease in Zion? and in what sense were they at ease?
 What did it mean to be secure in the mountain of Samaria?
 Who were the notable men and the chief of the nations?
 Locate on the map Calneh, Hamath, and Gath, and tell something about each.
 What was the apparent purpose of introducing them here?
 What was meant by putting far away the evil day?
 In what way did they cause the seat of violence to come near?
 What usually happens when people regard the judgment as far away?
 Describe the luxury which characterized the chief men of Israel.
 What was meant by singing idle songs to the sound of the viol?

Why did they invent to themselves additional instruments of music?
 Was David divinely authorized to introduce instrumental music into the worship of the Old Testament? Give reasons for your answer.
 What was meant by not being grieved for the affliction of Joseph?

Such Impiety Shall Be Punished
 What was the judgment pronounced upon these notable men?
 What had happened to the former glory of Israel?
 Why did God refuse to accept them any longer?

The Victor Identified
 What nation would be sent against Israel?
 What would be the extent of the affliction which they would impose upon them?
 Where were Hamath and the Arabah?
 What are some of the memorable passages in Amos?
 What New Testament references are made to Amos?

Lesson V—February 2, 1958

THE VISION OF OBADIAH

Lesson Text

Obad. 1: 1-12

1 The vision of O-ba-di'-ah.
 Thus saith the Lord Je-ho'-vah concerning E'-dom: We have heard tidings from Je-ho'-vah, and an ambassador is sent among the nations, *saying*, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle.

2 Behold, I have made thee small among the nations: thou art greatly despised.

3 The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground.

4 Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith Je-ho'-vah.

5 If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night (how art thou cut off!), would they not steal *only* till they had enough? if grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some gleanings grapes?

6 How are *the things* of E'-sau searched! how are his hidden treasures sought out!

7 All the men of thy confederacy

have brought thee on thy way, even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; *they that eat* thy bread lay a snare under thee: there is no understanding in him.

8 Shall I not in that day, saith Je-ho'-vah, destroy the wise men out of E'-dom, and understanding out of the mount of E'-sau?

9 And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one may be cut off from the mount of E'-sau by slaughter.

10 For the violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

11 In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Je-ru'-sa-lem, even thou wast as one of them.

12 But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Ju'-dah in the day of their destruction; neither speak proudly in the day of distress.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee." (Obad. 1: 15b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 49: 7-13.

Daily Bible Readings

January 27.	M.....	A Day of Vengeance (Isa. 34: 5-15)
January 28.	T.....	Edom and Jerusalem (Psalm 137)
January 29.	W.....	Edom's Sin to Be Revealed (Lam. 4: 17-22)
January 30.	T.....	Punishment of Edom (Ezek. 25: 12-14)
January 31.	F.....	Edom's Conqueror Rejoices (Isa. 63: 1-3)
February 1.	S.....	Jehovah Against Mount Seir (Ezek. 35: 1-15)
February 2.	S.....	Deliverance Upon Mount Zion (Obad. 17-21)

TIME.—About 585 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably somewhere in Judah.

PERSONS.—Obadiah and the Edomites.

Introduction

The name "Obadiah" means *servant of Jehovah*. The book which bears his name is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It contains only one chapter, with twenty-one verses. There is nothing known of this prophet, except that which may be gathered from his message which we now have under consideration. He was probably a contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The occasion for Obadiah's prophecy was the indecent behavior of the Edomites in rejoicing over the fall of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom. Edom was another name for Esau. (Gen. 25:30.) He was a twin brother of Jacob and their descendants, of course, were closely related; and the Edomites should have sympathized with them in their distress. But the history of the two people had never been congenial for long at a time.

The graceless inhumanity manifested by the Edomites did not, un-

fortunately, die with that generation. The same spirit is often seen today. It displeased God then and it still displeases him today. It is true that people often have to suffer for their sins, even in this life, but that does not give others the right to rejoice over the suffering people and take advantage of them in their distress.

The message of Obadiah deals with the basic nature of sin, and it is one which should be carefully studied today. (Rom. 15: 4.) The chief element of sin, according to Obadiah, is pride which manifests itself in two forms, namely, (1) its base and godless conduct which displays a lack of spiritual sense; (2) its defiance of God and a feeling of its own self-sufficiency. With this attitude toward God and man, it is easy to see the next step, violent opposition to others, especially the helpless. But the wages of sin is always death, and retribution is its final issue.

The Golden Text

"As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee." This is a lesson in retribution. The Edomites had gloated over Israel in their distress, and had laughed at their trouble. They cut off the fugitives, betrayed the refugees, and shared in the plunder of the stricken city when it could no longer defend itself. This brutal treatment will be swiftly punished. The vulture-like behavior of the Edomites pictures them as being glad to devour the prey which a bolder people had brought down. The least that Edom could have done in Israel's dark hour would have been to show a feeling of sympathy, but instead they

joined in the pillage of the city and afterward took to themselves that which they could get from a fallen people.

The golden text teaches that God is displeased with those who rejoice over the calamity of others, and that his judgment will be executed upon them. There are several references in other parts of the Bible to the hideous conduct of Edom, and Jehovah's attitude toward it. "Remember, O Jehovah, against the children of Edom The day of Jerusalem; Who said, Rase it, rase it, Even to the foundation thereof." (Psalm 137: 7. See also Lam. 4: 21, 22; Ezek. 25: 12-14; Amos 1: 11, 12.)

The Text Explained

Edom's Doom Foretold

(Obad. 1-4)

The vision of Obadiah. This is the title of the *Book of Obadiah*. The prophecy contained therein is short, so far as the number of words is concerned; but it is mighty in its scope, and powerful in its effect. *Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Edom.* This is a direct claim to inspiration. Obadiah spoke for God, and that which is said in this book is the message of Jehovah to the people addressed.

Edom was that territory south of the Dead Sea, and on both sides of the Arabah. The people of Edom overran the southern part of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem, and seized on it as far as Hebron. The part of the territory west of the Arabah later came to be known as Idumaea, and its inhabitants, Idumaeans. Their chief city, Hebron, was taken by Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C. (1 Macc. 4: 29, 61; 5: 65); and in 126 B.C. John Hyrcanus compelled the people to submit to circumcision and become Jews. (Cf. Josephus, Ant., 13: 9, 1.) Antipater, the governor of Idumaea, was made procurator of Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, by Julius Caesar, and he paved the way for his son, Herod the Great, to become king. (Matt. 2.) When Judaea fell under the Romans, Idumaea disappeared from history.

We have heard tidings from Jehovah, and an ambassador is sent among the nations. Jehovah gave assurance to Obadiah and his people that an ambassador, that is, a messenger or herald, would be sent to stir up the nations which would go against Edom, and inflict the Lord's punishment upon her. We are not told who the ambassador was, but he was probably a prophet. The Bible teaches that God rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4: 17), and he has frequently used powerful and wicked nations to execute his wrath upon those who have sinned. (Jer. 51: 20-24.) The names of the nations are not given, but they were probably the nomadic Arabs of Arabia, although the reference could have been to the Assyrians and Chaldeans. (Jer. 49: 14-22.)

Saying, Arise ye, and let us rise

up against her in battle. Almost identical language is found in Jer. 49: 14. The reference here was probably to the Nabataeans, one of the most powerful and warlike tribes of the Araba in North Arabia. These were the people who put an end to the power of Edom, around 300 B.C.

Behold, I have made thee small among the nations: thou art greatly despised. (Jer. 49: 15.) Jehovah has always attributed to himself the rise and fall of nations. If they are great, it is because of his providence; if they are small, it is because of his justice. The fact that the Edomites were greatly despised was due to their despicable conduct toward the Israelites in their helpless condition.

The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high: that saith in his heart. Who shall bring me down to the ground? The land of Edom was a mountainous country with many red "bald-headed" sandstone rocks, intersected by deep seams. These rocky mountains were full of caverns which served as the homes of the people. One of these strongholds is mentioned in 2 Kings 14: 7. Its Hebrew name was Sela (rock); the Greeks called it Petra. The Edomites evidently felt themselves impregnable. (Prov. 16: 18; Ezek. 36: 5.)

Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith Jehovah. (Jer. 49: 16.) No carnal security will protect those who have sinned against God. There was a considerable displacement of the Edomites by Arabs from the south during the fifth century before Christ, which was about the time Obadiah prophesied; but the nation was completely destroyed about three hundred years before the coming of Jesus.

The Prophet's Message to Edom

(Obad. 5-9)

If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night (how art thou cut off!), would they not steal only till they had enough? if grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some gleanings? This is a prediction of Edom's complete destruction.

The enemy which will come against them will treat them worse than thieves and robbers, who only take what they want, and those who harvest grapes, who always leave some grapes on the vines. But Edom, how art thou cut off!

How are the things of Esau searched! how are his hidden treasures sought out! This is a picture of soldiers looking for booty. (Jer. 49: 9, 10.) This latter prophet compares the destruction of Edom to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Jer. 49: 17, 18.)

All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee on thy way, even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread lay a snare under thee: there is no understanding in him. This is the result when men trust in alliances with their neighbors, rather than with God. Such confederates can make great pretensions when all seems well, at least to them; but when troubles arises or when these so-called friends want something else, the tables are turned. Moffatt translates this passage in these words: "You are driven to the very border; all your allies have betrayed you, your confederates have dislodged you, laying plots to discomfit you, plots you had no wit to see."

Shall I not in that day, saith Jehovah, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one may be cut off from the mount of Esau by slaughter. It appears from Jer. 49: 7 that Edom was at one time noted for its wise and prudent men. Eliphaz, a Temanite, one of Job's three friends (Job 2: 11), spoke thus regarding the destruction of the wise: "He frustrateth the devices of the crafty, So that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; And the counsel of the cunning is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the day-time, And grope at noon-day as in the night." (Job 5: 12-14.) Teman was one of the three principal cities of Edom, the other two being Petra and Bozrah. (Amos 1: 11, 12.)

The Reason for Edom's Destruction (Obad. 10-12)

For the violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. This passage assigns the reason for the terrible doom of Edom, "for the violence done to thy brother Jacob." If people today could only learn what the consequences will be when they sin against their brethren! (1 Cor. 8: 12; 2 Chron. 28: 17, 18.) It has already been pointed out that Edom joined with other nations in taking advantage of Judah after the latter had been overrun by the Babylonians. (Isa. 33: 1c.) Goodspeed's translation of Ezek. 36: 5 presents a graphic view of Jehovah's attitude toward the contemptuous conduct of Edom toward Judah: "In the fire of my indignation I speak against the rest of the nations, and especially against Edom—the whole of it—who with malicious glee and bitter contempt took over my land as a possession for themselves, to hold it as a prey."

In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. Thus, instead of standing with his brother Jacob, Edom was on the side of the enemy; and not only on the side of the enemy, but also taking part in the plunder and destruction of his brother, "as one of them," that is, Edom was himself one of them who took part in the overthrow and devastation of Judah.

But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither speak proudly in the day of their distress. It is true that Judah had sinned and was being punished for it, but that did not give Edom the right to rejoice over Judah's misfortune. This clearly shows that God does not approve of such conduct; and if he did not permit it on the part of such people as the Edomites, much less will he countenance such an attitude on the part of his people now. The law of love "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth." (1 Cor.

13: 6; Prov. 17: 5; 24: 17, 18: Psalm 35: 11-15.)

This short book is a fine example of things "written for our learning." (Rom. 15: 4.) A careful study of this record will teach us many things about the proper attitude toward the unfortunate, especially if our relations with them have been somewhat strained. God is always the avenger, and we must never presume to act in his stead.

Memorable Passages in Obadiah

"The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith

Jehovah." (3, 4.)

"Enter not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, look not thou on their affliction in the day of their calamity, neither lay ye hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress." (13, 14.)

"For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head." (15.)

"But in mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." (17.)

There is no direct reference in the New Testament to the Book of Obadiah.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What does the word "Obadiah" mean?

Discuss the relative length of this book.

Who were some of Obadiah's contemporaries?

What was the occasion for Obadiah's prophecy?

Who was Edom?

How did Esau come to be called Edom?

What does the history of the descendants of Jacob and Esau show regarding their general relationship?

What can you say regarding the graceless inhumanity manifested by the Edomites as it respects people today.

With what basic problem does the message of Obadiah deal?

What is the chief element of sin, according to him?

In what two general forms does it manifest itself?

What does such an attitude usually lead people to do?

What is the final issue of sin?

The Golden Text

What is the principal lesson of the golden text?

Give a broad outline of the conduct of Edom toward Judah.

How does God feel about such attitudes and conduct? Read and discuss the several scriptures cited.

Edom's Doom Foretold

What is the title of the book now under consideration?

What was meant by a "vision"?

Was Obadiah an inspired prophet? Give reasons for your answer.

Where was the land of Edom located?

In what way is the history of the New Testament connected with this land?

What was an ambassador? and what was this one's duty?

What does the Bible teach regarding God's relation with the kingdoms of men?

In what way was Edom to be punished?

How did the other nations feel toward Edom? and why?

What had the pride of Edom's heart done?

Give a brief description of the land of Edom.

Why did the Edomites feel themselves impregnable?

When did the destruction of Edom occur?

The Prophet's Message to Edom

What illustration did Obadiah use to show the extent of Edom's destruction?

With what did Jeremiah compare their destruction? and why?

What happened to Edom's allies? and why?

For what particular thing was Edom noted?

What famous man was from that country?

What were the three principal cities of Edom?

The Reason for Edom's Destruction

What was the reason assigned by the prophet?

What are some of the consequences of sinning against the brethren?

What was meant by Edom's standing on the "other side"?

What admonition did Jehovah give Edom regarding his attitude toward his brother's distress?

What does the law of love require in this respect?

How does the Book of Obadiah illustrate Paul's statement in Rom. 15: 4?

What are some of the memorable passages in Obadiah?

Are there any direct references in the New Testament to Obadiah?

Lesson VI—February 9, 1958

JONAH PREACHES REPENTANCE

Lesson Text

Jonah 3: 1-10

1 And the word of Je'-ho-vah came unto Jo'-nah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nin'-e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jo'-nah arose, and went unto Nin'-e-veh, according to the word of Je'-ho-vah. Now Nin'-é-veh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey.

4 And Jo'-nah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'-e-veh shall be overthrown.

5 And the people of Nin'-e-veh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 And the tidings reached the king of Nin'-e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him,

and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he made proclamation and published through Nin'-e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water;

8 But let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands.

9 Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Golden Text.—"And behold, a greater than Jonah is here." (Matt. 12: 41b.)

Devotional Reading.—Matt. 12: 38-41.

Daily Bible Readings

February 3.	M.....	Jonah Sent to Nineveh (Jonah 1: 1-11)
February 4.	T.....	Jonah Thrown from the Ship (Jonah 1: 11-17)
February 5.	W.	Jonah Prays for Deliverance (Jonah 2: 1-10)
February 6.	T.....	Jonah Pouts (Jonah 4: 1-5)
February 7.	F.....	Jonah Learns His Lesson (Jonah 4: 6-11)
February 8.	S.....	Jonah's Prophecy of Israel (2 Kings 14: 23-27)
February 9.	S.....	Jesus and Jonah (Luke 11: 29-32)

Time.—Probably sometime between 800 and 780 B.C.

Place.—Nineveh.

Persons.—Jonah and the Ninevites.

Introduction

The first mention made of Jonah in the Bible is in 2 Kings 14: 25. There the sacred historian speaks of Jonah's prophecy in connection with the success which attended the efforts of Jeroboam to restore the territory of Israel which had been taken by other nations. "He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Jehovah, the God of Israel, which he spake by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-

Hepher." Gath-Hepher was in Galilee, a few miles northeast of Nazareth.

The Book of Jonah is listed among the prophets of the Old Testament, but it differs from all other such books in that it is a narrative, rather than a prophecy. All other books of the prophets are filled with the prophetic utterances of the prophets, but there is very little recorded in Jonah of that which that prophet actually said. (Jonah 3: 4.)

It is a matter of regret that the

very mention of Jonah today provokes a smile, or even a sneer, on the part of multitudes of people. The word "Jonah" has become for many a sort of synonym for bad luck or misfortune; and, with this attitude toward the prophet, they miss both the beauty and the significance of the narrative. That Jonah himself was a real person, one who prophesied in the name of Je-

hovah, is attested in both the Old and the New Testament (2 Kings 14: 25; Matt. 12: 38-41; Luke 11: 29-32; Matt. 16: 4.) He lived and prophesied either in the early part of the reign of Jeroboam II (about 786-746), or during the period immediately preceding it. It is safe therefore to say that the date of his prophecy was somewhere in or near the period 800-780 B.C.

The Golden Text

"And behold, a greater than Jonah is here" These words were spoken by Jesus in response to a request by certain of the scribes and Pharisees for a sign from him. Jesus replied by informing them that such a request betrayed the fact that they belonged to an evil and adulterous generation; and he assured them that no sign would be given but the sign of Jonah the prophet. The entire context for the golden text is in Matt. 12: 38-42, and it should be carefully read by the student.

When Jesus said that the men of Nineveh shall "stand up" in the judgment with that generation, and shall condemn it, he was probably referring to the Jewish and Homan custom which required witnesses to stand up while testifying in a criminal case. The lesson which Jesus sought to impress upon his hearers was that inasmuch as the people of Nineveh responded to the preaching of a duly accredited prophet, but who apparently performed no miracles to confirm his message, they would by their action condemn the people who heard Jesus, a fully accredited teacher, who did perform miracles to confirm his message; for Jesus was in every way greater than Jonah, and those who hear him have a correspondingly greater responsibility.

It is not uncommon in these days, as it has been through the years, to hear someone object to the story of

Jonah on the ground that it would have been impossible for a whale to swallow him. The following quotation from M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* should help the student to a better understanding of the facts in the case, and prepare him for a more effective refutation of these unfounded objections.

"Much profane wit has been expended on the miraculous means of Jonah's deliverance, very unnecessarily and very absurdly; it is simply said, 'The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.' Now the species of marine animal is not defined, and the Greek *ketos* is often used to specify, not the genus whale, but any large fish or sea-monster. All objections to its being a whale which lodged Jonah in its stomach, from its straitness of throat or rareness of haunt in the Mediterranean, are thus removed." (Vol. IV, p. 991.) Thayer defines *ketos* to mean "a sea-monster, whale, huge fish"; and since Jehovah "prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah," we have every reason to believe that it was fully capable of doing just that. At any rate, we have the testimony of Jesus to that effect: "for as Jonah was three days and three nights *in the belly of the whale* [sea-monster, margin]; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

The Text Explained

The Commission to Jonah Repeated and His Reaction to It

(Jonah 3: 1-4)

And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time. This was after Jonah's attempt to flee from the presence of Jehovah, as recorded in Chapter 1. When God first

told him to go to Nineveh, he decided not to do it, but to flee to Tarshish instead. He had not gone far, however, in his flight before Jehovah arrested him, and he was cast into the sea and was swallowed by a great fish. Chapter 2 contains Jonah's prayer from the belly of the

fish, and his subsequent deliverance upon the dry land. The fact that the message came to Jonah from Jehovah is proof that he was inspired when he preached to the Ninevites.

Saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. Jonah was told in 1: 2 to "arise, go to Nineveh, . . . and cry against it," while in the verse now before us he was told to "*preach* unto it the preaching that I bid thee." The words "cry" and "preach" are from the same original term in the Hebrew, viz., *qara*, and they do no doubt have the same significance in Jehovah's instruction to Jonah. The prophet was to proclaim with a loud and earnest cry the danger which confronted the Ninevites.

Adam Clarke observes that such earnestness becomes a ministry that has to do with immortal souls which are asleep and dead in sin, hanging on the brink of perdition, and insensible to their state. The soft-speaking, gentle-toned, unmoved preacher, is never likely to awaken souls. People usually hear according to the way preachers preach; and they scarcely receive any counsel which appears to have no importance by the *manner* in which it is delivered. But the earnest type of preaching is entirely different from that noisy, blustering, screaming, ranting kind which manifests more of the turbulence of disorderly passions than of that which is inspired by a knowledge of God's word and the lost condition of souls.

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Jonah had learned his lesson, and he reminds us of the incident mentioned by Jesus in which a man said to his boy, "Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went." (Matt. 21: 28, 29.) The Book of Jonah has been called the first missionary book in the world, and Jonah, whose name means *dove*, is known as the missionary prophet.

Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey. The city of Nineveh was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10: 9-11) and was located on the east bank of the Tigris river. It was the last capital of the

Assyrian empire. Strabo says that "it was much larger than Babylon," and its builder is reported to have proposed, not only to make it the largest city in the world, but the largest that could be built by man! Something of its enormous size may be gathered from the statement of this verse, "*an exceeding great city, of three days' journey,*" and from 4: 11: "Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle."

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. We are not specifically told just what the three days' journey referred to, whether to the circumference of the city, across it, or whether it would take Jonah three days to go through the principal streets and lanes of the city, and proclaim his message. In either case, it was a great undertaking; and, so far as the record goes, his preaching was confined to a single statement, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." If that was the extent of his message, its continuous repetition was both unusual and most effective.

The Israelites, through the years, had developed an attitude toward other nations which was characterized to a great extent by hatred and bitterness; and they were greatly reluctant to show any interest in their spiritual welfare. The people of Israel felt that Jehovah was peculiarly their own, and that his supreme concern was *their* welfare. The lesson of the Book of Jonah was intended to correct this narrow viewpoint. It pictures God's love as embracing people of all nations, and his desire that all men should be brought to repentance. No other book in the Old Testament lays greater stress upon this matter.

The Response of the Ninevites to Jonah's Preaching (Jonah 3: 5-9)

And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. To believe in God is to have implicit confidence in that which he

says; it is to give full credit to his message. That is exactly what these people did; and their faith, as in all other instances, came by hearing God's word. (Rom. 10: 17.) It should be observed that they did not depend upon faith alone. Their faith put them to work, and they sought to demonstrate their inward feeling by their outward actions; they were greatly humiliated, as their fasting and sackcloth showed. Jesus, in commenting on this, said that the men of Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonah." (Matt. 12: 41.) Their repentance followed their faith. Men may preach "repentance and faith," but when it comes to actual practice they won't get the order wrong.

And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. (Job. 2: 8; Ezek. 27: 30.) The "tidings" could refer either to the preaching of Jonah or to that which the people had done, or to both. The king did not feel himself above any of his people in God's sight, and it was he who took the lead and ordered universal humiliation throughout the city. *"And he made proclamation and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands."*

The brute creation would have perished had the city been destroyed, and the beasts, therefore, were included in the general demonstration of penitence. (4: 11; Rom. 8: 20-22.) It seems to have been an eastern custom to have the animals share in man's outward demonstrations of humiliation. It is also worthy of note that the king and his people did not limit their action simply to fasting and wearing sackcloth, nor even to their mighty cry unto God; they demonstrated their penitence by turning "every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands." That was bringing forth fruit worthy of repentance. (Matt. 3: 8.)

Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? This implies that they had no special word of encouragement for believing that God would spare them as a result of their demonstrated humility; and that made their faith all the more remarkable. They were willing to do their part in correcting their wrong-doing, and then trust in God for his mercy. (Joel 2: 12-14.)

The Forbearance of a Merciful God

(Jonah 3: 10)

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not. It appears from the record that when Jonah was sent to Nineveh has had a message regarding their destruction which was absolute, and which was not dependent on what they might or might not do. This was probably the only way that the Ninevites could be awakened to their condition, and which would represent their due and God's purpose toward them as they then were. But when they turned from their evil ways, a new relation between them and God, a relation which was not contemplated in Jonah's message, came into being, and the way was opened for the word of God to take effect. The reason for the curse had been removed, and that made it possible for Jehovah to remove the curse.

That which was in reality a change in the Ninevites, and in Jehovah's corresponding dealing with them, is, in condescension to human conceptions, represented as a change in God. (1 Sam. 15: 29; Mal. 3: 6; James 1: 17.) The Bible always assigns the first place to the principles of righteousness, which are rooted in the very nature and character of God, and subordinates to them all divine arrangements. That is the reason why God could spare the Ninevites when they, in the very jaws of destruction, demonstrated their penitence and willingness to obey him.

When the Bible says that God repented himself it must be understood in the sense of his altering his attitude and conduct toward his creatures, either in the matter of bestow-

ing good or inflicting evil—which change in the divine attitude and conduct is based on the change in his creatures; and thus, speaking after the manner of men, Jehovah is said to repent. The Bible speaks of God's heart being grieved at man's iniquity (Gen. 6: 5-7), and it is perhaps not out of place to say that when man, in true penitence, turns from his wicked ways the emotions of God are aroused (speaking after the manner of men) which prompt him to a different course in dealing with his creatures. This is what the Bible means when it says that God repents.

Memorable Passages in Jonah

"But Jonah arose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah; and he went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah." (1: 3.)

"And Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three

days and three nights." (1: 17.)

"And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." (3: 4, 5.)

"And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. And Jehovah said, Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (4: 9-11.)

New Testament References to Jonah

Matt. 12: 39-41 (Jonah 1: 17);
Matt. 16: 4; Luke 11: 29-32.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the first mention of Jonah in the Bible?
Where was his home and in what part of the country was it located?
In what respect does the Book of Jonah differ from all other books of the prophets?
How do many people regard Jonah and the book which bears his name?
What can you say about the historical facts of each?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak these words?
What did he mean by the expression "stand up" in the judgment?
In what ways was Jesus greater than Jonah?
Why do some people object to the narrative which tells about Jonah's being swallowed by a "whale"?
Does the Bible say that a "whale" swallowed him? Give reasons for your answer.

The Commission to Jonah Repeated and His Reaction to It

Give the first statement of the commission to Jonah, and outline briefly facts contained in chapter 1.
What was the burden of Jonah's prayer while in the fish?
What claim to inspiration is made?

What kind of preaching did Jehovah authorize Jonah to do?
How are Jonah and the book which bears his name related to that which we call missionary work?
What can you say of the greatness of the city of Nineveh?
What were the words which Jonah used in his cry against Nineveh?
What was Israel's general attitude toward other nations? and why?
What is the principal lesson of the Book of Jonah?

The Response of the Ninevites to Jonah's Preaching

What does it mean to believe in God?
Did the Ninevites rely on faith only?
Give reasons for your answer.
What did Jesus say that they did?
How were faith and repentance related in their lives? and does their order make any difference?
How was the king affected and what did he do?
Why was the brute creation included?
On what did the Ninevites base their hope for salvation from destruction?

The Forbearance of a Merciful God

Did Jonah present any conditions in his preaching?
What led the Ninevites to repent?
Why did Jehovah spare the city?
In what sense did he repent?
What are some of the notable passages in Jonah?
What New Testament references are made to Jonah?

Lesson VII—February 16, 1958

MICAH'S VISION OF PEACE

Lesson Text

Mic. 4: 1-5; 5: 2-5

1 But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Je-ho'-vah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it.

2 And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Je-ho'-vah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zi-ón shall go forth the law, and the word of Je-ho'-vah from Je-ru'-sa-lem;

3 And he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Je-ho'-vah of hosts hath spoken it.

5 For all the peoples walk every

one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Je-ho'-vah our God for ever and ever.

2 But thou, Beth'-le-hem Eph'-ra-thah, which art little to be among the thousands of Ju'-dah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Is'-ra-el; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth: then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Is'-ra-el.

4 And he shall stand, and shall feed *his flock* in the strength of Je-ho'-vah, in the majesty of the name of Je-ho'-vah his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

5 And this *man* shall be *our* peace. When the As-syr'-i-an shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.

Golden Text.—“*And he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off*” (Mic. 4: 3a.)

Devotional Reading.—Isa. 11: 6-10.

Daily Bible Readings

February 10. M.....	A Prophecy of Peace (Mic. 4: 1-5)
February 11. T.....	The “Prince of Peace” (Mic. 5: 2-5)
February 12. W.....	Way of Peace (Isa. 2: 1-4)
February 13. T.....	Kingdom of Peace (Psalm 72: 11-14)
February 14. F.....	Kept in Peace (Isa. 26: 1-4)
February 15. S.....	Security of Peace (Isa. 11: 6-10)
February 16. S.....	Blessedness of Peacemakers (Matt. 5: 9-16)

Time.—Probably between 730 and 700 B.C.

Place.—Judea.

Persons.—Micah, Israel, and Judah.

Introduction

The prophet Micah was contemporary with Isaiah Hosea, and probably Amos. He appears to have been some younger than Isaiah. The name “Micah” means “Who is like Jehovah” and was probably an abbreviation for Micaiah. (1 Kings 22: 8.) Micah lived in a small village

called Moresheth-gath (1: 1, 14), near the border line between Judah and Philistia. The term “gath” was added to Moresheth, probably because the latter either at one time belonged to Gath, one of the principal cities of the Philistines, or was near that city. When translated, the name *More-*

sheth-gath means "possession of Gath."

Micah has been called the prophet of the countryside, in contrast with Isaiah who was a prophet of the city and the temple. Living in the country as he did, Micah probably did not come in contact with kings and make his influence felt in the political affairs of the nation, as Isaiah did. But he did have an opportunity to observe, and perhaps to feel, the suffering from the cruel injustices which the rich urban people inflicted upon the poorer folk of the rural areas. This experience, coupled with his inspiration (1: 1; 3: 8), made him ideally fitted to attack the shameless offenders in Samaria and Jerusalem, and in God's name to predict terrible punishment for both capitals.

There is no record in the Bible of Micah's call to be a prophet, or of any vision which he may have had. But the impression made by his prediction of the fall of Jerusalem (3: 12) was so great that it was still vividly recalled a hundred years

later, along with the effect it had on Hezekiah the king (Jer. 26: 18,19). This appeal to the prophecy of Micah was used by some of the leaders of Jerusalem to save Jeremiah from death because of a similar prediction which he had made against the city. (Jer. 26: 1-17.)

The Book of Micah is divided into three parts. The first three chapters contain certain prophecies of punishment for Jerusalem and Samaria, and a powerful arraignment of the corrupt leaders and their brutal oppression of the poor. Chapters 4 and 5 set forth the picture of the Golden Age of peace and the coming of the Prince of Bethlehem. These are among the noblest utterances in Jewish prophecy. Chapters 6 and 7 continue the rebuke of the sins of the people, give the perfect description of true religion, which is one of the great gems of religious literature, and close with a vision of the ultimate restoration of Jerusalem, in keeping with the promises made to the fathers.

The Golden Text

"And he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off." Inasmuch as the golden text of this

lesson is taken from the body of the text, it will be considered in detail in the comments to follow.

The Text Explained

The Messianic Kingdom Predicted

(Mic. 4: 1-5)

But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills. (Isa. 2: 2-4.) The "latter days" have reference to the time when the kingdom of Christ would be set up. (Acts 2: 17.) The term "mountain" is frequently used in the Bible in a figurative sense to indicate strength and stability, and when it is applied to a government or kingdom, as it evidently is here, the idea is that the kingdom shall be exceedingly strong. That, of course, would be true of the kingdom of Christ. Daniel, in speaking of the coming Messianic kingdom, referred to it as a mountain which filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2: 35.)

The temple which in some respects typified the church or kingdom of Christ was built upon Mount Mo-

riah, and the reference here to the establishment of "Jehovah's house" on the top of the mountains may find its significance in that fact. But when we read the parallel statement, "and shall be exalted above the hills," we are made to think of Daniel's prediction that the kingdom which the God of heaven would set up would "break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms," that is, the world empires about which he spoke, and would stand for ever. The probable meaning is that the Messianic kingdom would be stronger and more enduring than the kingdoms of the earth. This, of course, is true, as may be seen by reading Dan. 2: 44; Matt. 16: 18; Heb. 12: 28.

The house of Jehovah about which Micah spoke, as has already been indicated, was the kingdom which Christ would set up, and which is also called the church. The "kingdom" refers to the government fea-

ture of the institution, while "church" signifies its called out or separated feature. That the church and kingdom refer to one and the same thing is made plain in Matt. 16: 18,19, where the two terms are used interchangeably. Paul calls "the house of God" "the church of the living God." (1 Tim. 3: 15.)

And peoples shall flow unto it. Isaiah says that "all nations shall flow unto it." The obvious reference here is to the conversion of the Gentiles. This is certain from James's quotation from Amos, as found in Acts 15: 13b-18: "Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up: That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old."

And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob. The fact that so many would seek to enter into this house stands in marked contrast with the desolate picture which Micah drew in 3: 12: "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." When Jesus gave the great commission, he said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." (Matt. 28: 19a), or, as Mark has it, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16: 15.) The history of the church, beginning with Pentecost of Acts 2, shows that the prediction that all nations would flow unto it has been literally fulfilled.

And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. Teaching or instruction has always been peculiar to God's dealings with his people, in whatever age they may have lived. No one can know the will of God in the absence of teaching. "And all thy children shall be

taught of Jehovah; and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Isa. 54: 13.) "Good and unright is Jehovah: Therefore will he instruct sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in justice; And the meek will he teach his way. . . . What man is he that feareth Jehovah? Him shall he instruct in the way that he shall choose." (Psalm 25: 8, 9, 12.) "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6: 45.)

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. Passing by the technical difference between Zion and Jerusalem, the former being the most southwestern, as well as the highest, mountain on which Jerusalem was built, it should be noted that as used by the prophets, Zion and Jerusalem mean one and the same place. This city had been the center of Jewish worship from the days of David; and now that the religion of Christ is to supersede the religion of Moses, the authority for the change, as well as the law to govern the new institution, will have its origin in this great center. (Luke 24: 46, 47; Acts 2.)

And he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off. The reference here is to the government or kingdom of Christ. All judgment has been given into his hands. "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son." (John 5: 22; Psalm 110: 6.) His word is the basis for this judgment. Those who do his will will be approved; those who do not, will be condemned. (John 16: 7-11; 3: 17-21.) Many nations had gone against Israel and Judah, and had pronounced judgment upon them; but when Christ comes, all of this will be changed.

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. This is a complete reversal of the condition mentioned in Joel 3: 9-13, where the Gentiles were to go against Israel. The kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of peace and of peaceful

pursuits. Christ himself said that wars and rumors of war would continue, but that had reference to the kingdoms of the world, not to his kingdom. (Matt. 24: 6ff.)

No man can reconcile Christianity and war. War is the most colossal and ruinous social sin which affects mankind today. It is utterly unchristian. It means, in its total methods and effects everything which Jesus did not mean, and it means nothing that he did mean. Christians should put the kingdom of God first in their lives, and endeavor by their example to lead men into the way of him who is the Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9: 6; 11: 6-9.)

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. This is a picture of the prosperity and contentment of the people of Christ, this, of course, being a figure of speech. No mention is made of a house; for men would be safe in the field and open air. The vine and the fig-tree as a place of habitation was a favorite mode of expression in the Old Testament. "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." (1 Kings 4: 25.) "In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree." (Zech. 3: 10; John 1: 48.)

The peace and protection under Christ, of which Jehovah spoke, as revealed by Micah, is a spiritual peace and protection. (Luke 12: 4, 5.) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26: 3.) "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7; 13, 19.) (Psalm 84: 11; Matt. 6: 33; Rom. 8: 28; Heb. 13: 5, 6; 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever. The peoples mentioned here were the Gentiles,

who would continue to follow after their own gods, but the Jews, following the captivity, and the Lord's people under Christ, would follow only Jehovah. The primary reference here is to the fact that the Jewish people were thoroughly weaned from idolatry by the Babylonian exile. (1 John 5: 21; 2 Cor. 10: 7, 14.)

The Prince of Bethlehem

(Mic. 5: 2-5a)

But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah. From *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible* we learn that Bethlehem was one of the oldest towns in Palestine, already in existence when Jacob returned to that country from Paddan-aram. Its earlier name was Ephrath or Ephratah. (Gen. 35: 16-19; 48: 7.) After the conquest Bethlehem appears under its own name "Bethlehem-judah" (Judg. 17: 7; Ruth 1: 1, 2; 1 Sam. 17: 12), possibly, but hardly probably, to distinguish it from the small and remote place of the same name in Zebulun.

Out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. This refers to Jesus who was born in Bethlehem. For centuries, especially between the Testaments, there had been suspense, as the people had awaited his coming; and then one night over the quiet plain below the city the voice of the angel was heard as he spoke these words to the lowly shepherds: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2: 10, 11.) The expressions "from of old" and "everlasting" have reference to his eternal nature and the many predictions throughout the ages regarding his coming. (John 1: 1, 2; Luke 24: 46.)

Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth: then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. Pending the coming of Christ, Israel would be at the mercy of their enemies. She who travaileth may have its primary meaning in Mary the mother of Jesus (Isa. 7: 14), and a secondary

application in the church under the figure of a woman (Rev. 12: 1-6). At any rate, after the establishment of the church all men, both Jews and Gentiles, would be brought to Christ. (Eph. 2: 14-18; Acts 2: 38, 39.) If the reference is primarily to the Jews, then they would return, not as a nation, but as individuals, as the true Israel. (Rom. 11: 25-32.)

And he shall stand, and shall feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be our peace. The first part of verse 5 belongs to the preceding passage. The best commentary on this passage is John 10, where Jesus is represented as the good shepherd. Paul declares emphatically that he is our peace. (Eph. 2: 14; Col. 3: 15.)

Enemies Shall Be Conquered

(Mic. 5: 5b)

When the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise a gainst him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. At the time Micah spoke the Assyrians were the most powerful enemies of Israel, but the probability is that the Assyrian as used here was to represent all future enemies of the Lord's people. It appears that the use of seven and eight was idiomatic, that is, that was the way the Hebrews had of expressing the idea of a full and sufficient number to meet the need. (Job. 5: 19; Prov. 6: 16; Eccles. 11: 2.)

Memorable Passages in Micah

"Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it,

because it is in the power of their hand." (2: 1.)

"Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" (2: 7b.)

"And the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them. . . . But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of Judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." (3: 6b, 8.)

"Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 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." (6: 6-8.)

"The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is worse than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen, even thy visitation, is come; now shall be their perplexity. Trust ye not in a neighbor; put ye not confidence in a friend; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoreth the father, and the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house." (7: 4-6.)

New Testament References to Micah

Matt. 2: 6 (Micah 5: 2); Matt. 10: 35, 36 with Micah 7: 5, 6; John 4: 37 with Micah 6: 15; John 7: 42 (Micah 5: 2).

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons. Why are these important?

Introduction

What other prophets were contemporary with Micah?

What did the name "Micah" mean? and where did he live?

How was Micah distinguished from Isaiah?

What particular fitness for prophesying did Micah possess?

What use was made of Micah's prophecy

in the days of Jeremiah?

What are the general divisions of the Book of Micah?

The Text Explained

Did you read the parallel in Isaiah? Why?

To what did the "latter days" refer?

What did the term "mountain" signify?

How did Daniel describe the kingdom of Christ?

In what sense was the kingdom exalted above the hills?

How are the terms, kingdom, church, and house used with reference to the people of God in Christ?

What did Micah mean when he said, "And peoples shall flow unto it"?
 What place has "teaching" always had in God's dealings with his people?
 From where would the law go? and why?
 In what sense does Christ judge peoples and nations?
 What does it mean to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks?
 How are the kingdom of Christ and war related?
 What did it mean to sit under one's vine and fig-tree?
 In what sense does Christ give peace to his people?
 When did idolatry cease among the Hebrews?

Are the Lord's people today in danger of idolatry?
 What signal honor came to Bethlehem?
 In what way did God give up the Jews pending the coming of Christ?
 Who were the residue of the brethren who would return unto the children of Israel?
 In what sense will "all Israel" be saved?
 How is the work of Christ described by Micah?
 What promise was made with reference to the enemies of God's people?
 What memorable passages are found in the Book of Micah?
 What New Testament references to Micah are made?

Lesson VIII—February 23, 1958

NAHUM PROPHECIES OF THE FALL OF NINEVEH

Lesson Text

Nah. 3: 1-10

1 Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and rapine; the prey departeth not.

2 The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels, and prancing horses, and bounding chariots,

3 The horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear, and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of corpses, and there is no end of the bodies; they stumble upon their bodies;—

4 Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.

5 Behold, I am against thee, saith Je-ho'-vah of hosts, and I will uncover thy skirts upon thy face; and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.

6 And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock.

7 And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nin'-e-veh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?

8 Art thou better than No-a-mon, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about her; whose rampart was the sea, *and* her wall was of the sea?

9 E-thi-o'-pi-a and E'-gypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lu'-bim were thy helpers.

10 Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed in pieces at the head of all the streets; and they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.

Golden Text.—*"Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him."* (Nah. 1: 7.)

Devotional Reading.—Nah. 1: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

February 17. M.....	Justice of Jehovah (Nah. 1: 1-15)
February 18. T.....	Destruction of Assyria (Isa. 10: 5-19)
February 19. W.....	King of Assyria (Isa. 37: 33-38)
February 20. T.....	Nineveh and Nimrod (Gen. 10: 6-14)
February 21. F.....	Nineveh's King Captures Israel (2 Kings 17: 1-18)
February 22. S.....	Defeat at Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32: 9-23)
February 23. S.....	Nineveh's Ruin (Nah. 3: 11-19)

Time.—Probably between 640 and 612 B.C.

Place.—Unknown.

Persons.—Nahum and Nineveh.

Introduction

The word "Nahum" means *comforter* or *compassion*. There is nothing known of his personal history other than that which may be learned from the book which bears his name. Bible students are not agreed regarding the place where the prophet lived. He is called "the Elkoshite" (1: 1) which means that he was an inhabitant or native of Elkosh; but where was that city or village? Some think that it was probably in Galilee; others on the bank of the Tigris, not far from Nineveh; while still others profess to see Elkosh in Capernaum, as the "village of Nahum."

The place of residence, of course, is not important; the thing that counts is the fact that Nahum was a prophet of Jehovah. The theme of his prophecy was the approaching fall of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. This mighty power had held sway for centuries, and has been regarded by Bible students as the most brutal of all the ancient heathen nations, the most cruel of them all, and the ones who took the greatest delight in recording their atrocities in their inscriptions.

It appears that the purpose of the prophet, in keeping with the meaning of his name, was to give comfort and consolation to the people of Judah who had long been harassed by the Assyrians. This mighty empire had brought an end to the kingdom of Israel some eight or ten years before its own fall, when Sargon carried the Israelites away into exile.

There is a wonderful contrast between this book and the Book of Jonah. The Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah, more than a hundred and fifty years before; but when Nahum spoke against them their doom was sealed; they had gone beyond repentance. Bible students are not in agreement on the date of the final overthrow of Nineveh. It seems that the most probable date was 612 B. C., and if that is correct, Nahum probably uttered his prophecy a short time before the fall, between 614 and 612 B. C.

The prophecy of Nahum is unique in several ways. He has been described as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, poet among the prophets. Some versions of the Bible have arranged his entire book in poetical form. His language, like that of Isaiah, is lofty and very suggestive. Nahum is the first of the prophets which we have studied in this series who did not condemn his own people, along with their enemies. It is, of course, probable that he spoke much more than is recorded in the book which bears his name (Acts 2: 40), and he may have addressed other prophecies to the Hebrews.

The book of Nahum is roughly divided into three parts, viz., Chapter 1, The Introduction and Theme of the Prophecy; Chapter 2, A Description of the Calamity which would Befall Nineveh; Chapter 3, The Reasons for the Judgments Which Would Be Inflicted.

The Golden Text

"Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: and he knoweth them that take refuge in him." These words are like a star of hope in the midst of great and terrible darkness. Read the entire paragraph in which they are found, verses 2-8. This passage has been described as a magnificent display of the glory of God, revealing his wrath and justice against the wicked and his grace and mercy toward his people. The anger of his might is terrible toward those in rebellion against him, but his love is tender and reassuring toward them who humbly serve him. The same almighty power which is

exerted for the terror of the wicked is extended for the comfort of the righteous.

The goodness of God is one of his chief attributes, and the theme is discussed throughout the Bible. He is good and only good; there is no evil in him. He cannot tolerate evil because he is good, and when he turns his face against the wicked and punishes their sin, he is but manifesting his goodness. Jesus said that "none is good save one, even God." (Mark 10: 18.) Not only is God good, but he wants all of his people to be like him, he wants them to be good. Goodness is one of the fruits

of the Spirit which all who please the Lord must have. (Gal. 5: 22, 23.)

No good can ever come to any one in the form of outward possessions which is comparable to the blessedness of *being good*. Even Jehovah himself, let it be said with reverence, cannot do one the highest good until he *is* good. "Do good, O Jehovah, unto those that are good, And to them that are upright in their

hearts." (Psalm 125: 4.) Yes, God is good and he wants all of his children to be like him. He is indeed a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knows all of those who will put their trust in him. "The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." (2 Tim. 2: 19.)

The Text Explained

The Doom of the City Foretold

(Nah. 3: 1-4)

Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and rapine; the prey departeth not. Moffatt translates this passage in these words, "O city soaked with blood! crammed with lies and plunder—no end to your ravaging!" This was a terrible indictment against the proud city of Nineveh, the capital of the mighty Assyrian empire, which had so long harassed weaker nations. As Nahum began his prophecy, he described God as one who never winks at evil. The prophet's words are:

Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth: Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty: Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." (1:2, 3.)

People sometimes become impatient when wrong-doing is not immediately punished, and they want to take the matter in their own hands. But God has surely warned that vengeance is his and that he will surely repay. It is a lack of faith on our part when we are unwilling to wait on the Lord. (Rom. 12: 17-21.) Jehovah had showed himself slow to anger when he spared the Ninevites during the days of Jonah; but when they returned to their evil ways, divine patience was exhausted and their doom was sealed.

Nineveh's arraignment before the bar of divine justice was characterized by specific counts. It was a city soaked with blood. The implication here is that this blood had been shed through unrighteousness—perhaps much of it was innocent

blood. Nations today are suffering in a similar manner, and their persecutors will have to answer to God for their crimes. Sinners of this type usually endeavor to hide their crimes behind lies, while they continue their plundering for gain. They are never satisfied with their gain by spoil and oppression.

The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels, and prancing horses, and bounding chariots, the horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear, and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of corpses, and there is no end of the bodies; they stumble upon their bodies. This graphic description of the battle which brought the Assyrians to their knees is so real that one can almost imagine himself there in the midst of it. It has already been pointed out in this study that the exact time of Nahum's prophecy is not known. Some Bible students have thought that when Israel was taken captive, Nahum, whom they suppose was living in Galilee, escaped, and probably took up his residence in Jerusalem, where he was soon to witness the beginning of the end of Assyria's mighty fall. (2 Kings, chapters 18,19.)

We read in Nahum 2 these words: "He that dasheth in pieces is come up against thee: keep the fortress, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily. . . . The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots flash with steel in the day of his preparation, and the cypress spears are brandished. The chariots rage in the streets; they rush to and fro in the broad ways: the appearance of them is like torches; they run like the lightnings. He remembereth his nobles: they stumble in their march; they make

haste to the wall thereof, and the mantelet is prepared. The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved."

This appears to be a description of the preparation on the part of Nineveh for the great battle to follow. "He that dasheth in pieces is come up against thee" was probably Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. Two mighty powers are brought together in our lesson today which shows God's method of punishing sinful nations. Babylon was used here, but she will be punished later. (Jer. 50:17,18.) Bewer's translation of the battle's description is very suggestive: "Hark, the whip! Hark, rattling of wheels! Prancing horses and jumping chariots! Horsemen charging! Flashing sword and glittering spear (of the foot soldiers)! Multitude of slain, mass of carcasses and no end of corpses!"

Because of the multitude of the whoredom of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. This statement assigns the reason for Nineveh's destruction. It should be kept in mind, however, that "whoredoms" did not mean, as in the case of Israel, idolatrous worship; for Assyria was not a worshipper of the true God. The reference is to her harlot-like practices, whereby she allured other people and made them subject to her. As the unsuspecting are lured by the well-favored harlot's appearance, so it was with Israel, Judah and other nations of that day. (2 Kings 16: 7-10.) But now, Nineveh and the Assyrian empire are to be subjected to the same atrocities which they had inflicted upon others. (Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

Nineveh's Dishonor and Humiliation

(Nah. 3: 5-7)

Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of hosts. There is no calamity which can befall any individual or nation which is comparable to having Jehovah against him or it. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10: 31.) This is true because Jehovah is a living Deity and the condition of his enemies is therefore hopeless. He has all power and can inflict the punishment which pleases

him; he is infinitely just and holy, and will certainly inflict the punishment which ought to be inflicted; and he lives for ever and has promised that the punishment of the wicked shall never end. (2 Cor. 5: 9-11.)

And I will uncover thy skirts upon thy face; and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. It has been said that it was a custom to strip prostitutes naked, or throw their clothes over their heads, and thereby expose them to public shame. The figurative language which is here used with reference to Nineveh was apparently based upon that practice. The idea is that they would be subjected to the highest degree of ignominy and disgrace. Their true harlot-like nature would be seen by all nations. (Nah. 2: 7.)

And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock. This, apparently, was taken from the custom of placing harlots in public stocks and exposing them to public scorn and ridicule. While thus exposed, it seems that "children and others threw mud, dirt, and filth of all kinds at them." That would be a horrible experience for the once proud and mighty mistress of the nations.

And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste, who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee? Those who formerly fled to her for protection will not flee from her to escape her doom. The exposed and humiliated Nineveh who had been the cause of the downfall of so many, is now left to suffer her own shame alone. (Isa. 51: 17-20.)

Her Inescapable Defeat Portrayed

(Nah. 3: 8-10)

Art thou better than No-amon, that was situated among the rivers, that had the waters round about her; whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was of the sea? Amon was one of the gods of Egypt, and No-amon means the city of Amon, "the 'City', par excellence, of the god Amon." (Jer. 46: 25.) This city has been identified as ancient Thebes, on the Nile in Upper Egypt, Thebes being the Greek name for the Egyptian city.

It was situated on both sides of the Nile, and its strategic location made it much easier to defend. Nineveh could not boast of being better than the city of Egypt which was destroyed. (Ezek. 30: 14-16.)

Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers. The natural location of No-amon was thought to make the city impregnable; but when the alliances of Ethiopia (Cush), Egypt, Put, a part of Africa, and Lubim, probably the Libyans, which are described as *infinite*, are taken into consideration, the inhabitants probably thought that it would be impossible for an enemy to take the city. (Jer. 46: 9.)

Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed in pieces at the head of all the streets; and they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. This was the fate of the powerful city of No-amon. It is thought by some Bible students that No-amon was taken by Sargon, king of Assyria, soon after he took the ten tribes of Israel into captivity. If this is true, then the Ninevites were reminded that as No-amon, in spite of all her might and resources, fell to them, just so would they fall to another conquering power, namely, the Babylonians. The remainder of the chapter continues the description of their downfall. "There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (Verse 19.) The captors cast lots for the

honorable men to be their slaves, and the great men were bound in chains, probably to grace the triumph of the victor. (Zeph. 2: 13-15.)

Memorable Passages in Nahum

"Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty: Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." (1:3.)

"Jehovah is good, and a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him.

(1: V.)

"Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" (1: 15a.)

"The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots flash with steel in the day of his preparation, and the cypress spears are brandished. The chariots rage in the streets; they rush to and fro in the broad ways; the appearance of them is like torches; they run like the lightnings." (2: 3,4.)

"Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles are at rest; thy people are scattered upon the mountains, and there is none to gather them. There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (3: 18,19.)

New Testament References to Nahum

(Rom. 10: 15; Nah. 1: 15.) (Isa. 52: 7.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What does the word "Nahum" mean?

What is known of his personal history and place of residence?

What was the theme of his prophecy?

What can you say of the character of Nineveh and the Assyrians?

What was the purpose which Nahum seemed to have had in mind?

What contrast is noted between the Books of Nahum and Jonah?

What are some of the characteristics of the Book of Nahum?

Give an outline of the book.

The Golden Text

What is the principal lesson of the golden text?

What does the Bible teach regarding the goodness of God?

How important is it that God's people follow him in this respect?

The Doom of the City Foretold

What was the divine indictment against Nineveh?

What is always Jehovah's attitude toward evil?

What has he promised to do regarding all wrong-doing?

What were the specific counts which were charged against Nineveh?

Give the description of the battle which

would destroy the city.
 Who would do the destroying?
 What preparation was Nineveh told to make?
 What was the reason for Nineveh's destruction?

Nineveh's Dishonor and Humiliation

What does it mean for Jehovah to be against one? Give reasons for your answer.
 What did God say he would do to Nineveh?
 To what was her punishment compared?
 What would be the attitude of those about her?

Her Inescapable Defeat Portrayed
 What question did he ask her?
 Who or what was No-amon?
 What kind of defense did the city have?
 Who were her allies and where did they live? See map.
 What was the force of the comparison of Nineveh with No-amon?
 Describe the final fate of the city.
 What are some of the memorable passages in the Book of Nahum?
 Are there any direct references in the New Testament to this book?

Lesson IX—March 2, 1958

HABAKKUK WRITES OF JEHOVAH

Lesson Text

Hab. 1: 12-14; 3: 1-6, 17-19

12 Art not thou from everlasting,
 O Je-ho'-vah my God, my Holy One?
 we shall not die. O Je-ho'-vah, thou
 hast ordained him for judgment; and
 thou, O Rock, hast established him
 for correction.

13 Thou that art of purer eyes
 than to behold evil, and that canst
 not look on perverseness, wherefore
 lookest thou upon them that deal
 treacherously, and holdest thy peace
 when the wicked swalloweth up the
 man that is more righteous than he;

14 And makest men as the fishes
 of the sea, as the creeping things,
 that have no ruler over them?

1 A prayer of Ha-bak'-kuk the
 prophet, set to Shig-i-o'-noth.

2 O Je-ho'-vah, I have heard the re-
 port of thee, and am afraid:

O Je-ho'-vah, revive thy work in
 the midst of the years;
 In the midst of the years make it
 known;

In wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Te'-man,
 And the Holy One from mount
 Pa'-ran. [Se'-lah

His glory covered the heavens,
 And the earth was full of his
 praise.

4 And *his* brightness was as the light;

He had rays *coming forth* from
 his hand;

And there was the hiding of his
 power.

5 Before him went the pestilence,
 And fiery bolts went forth at his
 feet.

6 He stood, and measured the earth;
 He beheld, and drove asunder the
 nations;

And the eternal mountains were
 scattered;

The everlasting hills did bow;
 His goings were *as* of old.

17 For though the fig-tree shall not
 flourish,

Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
 The labor of the olive shall fail,
 And the fields shall yield no food;
 The flock shall be cut off from the
 fold,

And there shall be no herd in the
 stalls:

18 Yet I will rejoice in Je-ho'-vah,
 I will joy in the God of my sal-
 vation.

19 Je-ho'-vah, the Lord, is my
 strength;

And he maketh my feet like
 hinds' *feet*,
 And will make me to walk upon
 my high places.

Golden Text.—“*But Jehovah is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep
 silence before him*” (Hab. 2: 20.)

Devotional Reading.—Hab. 1: 1-11.

Daily Bible Readings

February 24. M..... Living Wisely (Prov. 1: 1-10)
 February 25. T..... Folly of Unfaithfulness (Isa. 5: 8-17)

February 26. W.....	Sowing and Reaping (Gal. 6: 1-9)
February 27. T.....	A Wise Course (Eccles. 12: 9-14)
February 28. F.....	A Wise Decision (Psalm 26: 1-12)
March 1. S.....	Woe on the Unjust (Jer. 22: 13-19)
March 2. S.....	Jehovah Versus False Gods (Jer. 2: 26-37)

Time.—Probably between 608-597 B.C.

Place.—Probably in Jerusalem.

Persons.—Habakkuk and Jehovah.

Introduction

If the suggested date of this lesson is correct, then it was during the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, that Habakkuk uttered his prophecy. The Assyrian empire had just been overthrown, and the mighty Babylonians were coming into power. Egypt also was still to be reckoned with. Josiah, the sixteenth king of Judah, and widely known for his godly reformatings, was dead as the result of a battle wound. He was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz, but his reign came to an abrupt end when Pharaoh-necoh deposed him and set his older brother, Jehoiakim, one of the most godless, selfish, and tyrannical kings to rule over Judah, upon the throne. (Jer. 36.) It was against this background that Habakkuk cried out, "O Jehovah, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save." (Hab. 1: 2. Read on through verse 4.)

The Book of Habakkuk presents a situation which has not heretofore been encountered in our study of the prophets. Even a superficial reading of their works will reveal the fact that they were primarily teachers and preachers of religion and ethics. They addressed themselves to their fellow countrymen in an effort to win them back to Jehovah and the way of righteousness. But that was not the way of Habakkuk. He addressed himself to Jehovah. He was clearly confused by the wicked conditions about him, and he even questioned the divine justice and providence in dealing with them.

Habakkuk was evidently revealing the innermost thoughts of his own heart, as well as those about him; and in doing so he received God's answer, not only for his own sake, but also for the sake of tried and troubled souls of all ages. This was evidently God's plan for this prophet. He has been called the prophet of

faith. His faith in Jehovah was strong, but, like many other pious souls, he was greatly troubled by the apparent inequalities of life. But instead of sulking, as people in such situations so often do, he took the matter to Jehovah. It was hard for him to reconcile these apparent inequalities with his lofty conception of God, but he wanted the Lord's answer. He was willing to trust in the Lord, and the result was that his faith was made stronger.

Habakkuk gave utterance to two sublime truths: (1) Jehovah was not interested in Israel alone. It was true that he exercised a special Divine Providence over them; but he also ruled in the kingdoms of other nations as well. This was clearly seen by his dealing with the proud and boastful Chaldeans. (2) "But the righteous shall live by his faith." (2: 4.) Paul quoted this passage in Rom. 1: 17; Gal. 3: 11; and Heb. 10: 38. Faithfulness always assures permanency, as the following quotation from *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* shows: "A living faith determines conduct; religion and ethics go hand in hand, and especially in the hour of adversity a belief in Jehovah and unflinching reliance upon him are the strongest preservers of fidelity and integrity. Faith without works is dead; faith expresses itself in life. Habakkuk places chief emphasis upon the expressions of faith, and he does so rightly; but in doing this he also calls attention by implication at least, to the motive power behind the external manifestations. As an expression of living faith, 3: 17-19 is not surpassed in the Old Testament." (Vol. II, p. 1313.)

The prophecy of Habakkuk, like that of Nahum, is short. For a practical analysis of it, the following is suggested: A cry for Jehovah to avenge the righteous Jews who were

suffering at the hands of their wicked brethren (1: 1-4); Jehovah's promise to send the Chaldeans for that purpose, (1: 5-11); Habakkuk's perplexity, since the Jews were more righteous than the Chaldeans, (1: 12-17); Jehovah replies that the wicked nation (the Chaldeans) shall also be overthrown; their power will be but

temporary, (2: 1-4); woes pronounced upon the Chaldeans, (2: 5-20); the lyrical prayer of Habakkuk, (3: 1-19). The Book of Habakkuk has been described as a composition unrivaled for boldness of conception. Sublimity of thought, and majesty of diction. Its figures are all happily chosen and splendidly developed.

The Golden Text

"But Jehovah is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." This is one of the passages in Habakkuk which has been put to universal use. This is the true attitude of the faithful servant of Jehovah. The Bible describes God as omnipresent, that is, he inhabits the universe; omnipotent, that is, he knows no limitations; omniscient, that is, he sees all things from the beginning and knows that which is best for every creature. Furthermore, he is good and only good. Any one who believes these things about Jehovah (and he cannot please him if he does not believe them, Heb. 11: 6), will not find it difficult to stand in silence before Jehovah. (Zeph. 1: 7; Zech. 2: 13.)

Divine Providence is a subject clearly taught in the Bible, but one which no one can completely understand. Therefore, when one is perplexed and in doubt regarding the providential ruling of Jehovah, he should be willing to take the matter to God in prayer, and then wait on him for his answer. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known

unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6,7.) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26: 3.)

Men may arise, assert themselves, and trample upon the rights of others, but those of faith must never forget that Jehovah is in his holy temple; he will not abdicate to others, and he cannot be supplanted. Therefore, when he makes a promise or gives a command, we should hear him with the deepest respect, obey him with the promptest diligence, and trust in him and serve him with the deepest reverence. There is a striking resemblance between Habakkuk and Job. Head the last five chapters of Job. Chaldea's mission was to punish Judah, but she failed to recognize the hand of God and humble herself. Her own punishment therefore would surely come, and the righteous Hebrew could afford to wait patiently, trust in God, and do right. These strong, serene words of the golden text have helped many questioning souls all down through the ages.

The Text Explained

Habakkuk's Complaint About the Cruelty of the Agents

(Hab. 1: 12-14)

Art not thou from everlasting, O Jehovah my God, my Holy One?

This section of the text must be understood in the light of the description of the Chaldeans, as given in Hab. 1: 5-11. They were called "that bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from them-

selves. . . . Then shall he sweep by as a wind, and shall pass over, and be guilty, even he whose might is his god."

This description of the enemy which Jehovah would send against Judah reveals several things: (1) They were bitter and hasty; terrible and dreadful; and self-sufficient, that is, they did not trust in Jehovah. Their might was their god. (2) They would sweep by as a wind, and pass over, that is they would be only a temporary scourge. (3) They would themselves be guilty, and, as

he shows later on, would be punished.

Now, in contrast with this, Habakkuk recognized Jehovah as both everlasting, that is, eternal, and holy. The Chaldean god was temporary, but Jehovah was eternal; the Chaldeans were selfish and bent on mischief, but Jehovah was righteous and would always seek the good of his people.

We shall not die. Although the terrible and dreadful armies of the Chaldeans would be sent against the Jews to punish them, Habakkuk was sure that they would not be completely destroyed. He knew that a God who is everlasting and holy is also full of mercy, and that he would surely prevent the total destruction of his people.

O Jehovah, thou hast ordained him for judgment; and thou, O Rock, hast established him for correction. This sentence shows that the prophet fully understood God's purpose in sending the Chaldeans against the Jews. They were to carry out his judgment against them and correct their way of life; but not to destroy them utterly. (Isa. 10: 5-7.) Jehovah did not intend for the Chaldeans to go beyond his purpose or to defy their own power (see verse 11); but since they did both, they would be guilty in God's sight.

Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and boldest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he; and makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them? Here is an apparent inequality and a situation involving the nature and conduct of Jehovah which Habakkuk was wholly unable to understand. But instead of speaking evil against Jehovah (Job 1: 22), the prophet went directly to him with his problem (Psalm 73: 11-17).

Habakkuk's attitude in the matter now before us has a lesson and an example for all generations; and, incidentally, this is splendid commentary on the meaning of Paul's statement in Rom. 5: 4. Habakkuk could not be swayed from his high and lofty conception of the character

of God; he held stedfastly to that, and reverently called upon Jehovah to reveal to him the apparent inconsistency. The Jews had sinned grievously, as he had complained in verse 2-4, and God was punishing them; but what Habakkuk could not understand was that a nation which was much more wicked than the Jews was being favored of God to do the punishing.

The Hebrew people were compared to fish in the sea, and to creeping things with no ruler over them to help or defend them. The Chaldeans as the fishermen were casting their nets into the sea; and being always successful in their catch, they rejoiced and sacrificed unto their net as if it were their god. "Shall he therefore empty his net, and spare not to slay the nations continually?" (Verses 15-17.) This was the problem before Habakkuk.

Habakkuk's Prayer to Jehovah (Hab. 3: 1-6)

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, set to Shigionoth. It has already been pointed out in this study that Jehovah gave his answer to Habakkuk regarding the Chaldeans. Their power would be but temporary, and they would surely be punished. (2: 1-4). Jehovah's answer to Habakkuk was followed by a series of woes pronounced against the Chaldeans. Having thus been informed of God's purpose in all this, the prophet uttered a prayer that Jehovah would hasten the redemption of his people.

Shigionoth is the plural of *Shigaion*, an obscure word which is found in the title of Psalm 7. Its meaning now, in the opinion of the best Bible scholars, is not known. This is a good place to learn something of the nature of prayer, inasmuch as that which is called Habakkuk's prayer is wholly unlike that which we are accustomed to call prayer today. It is almost wholly devoid of petition. Petition, of course, is a vital part of a comprehensive prayer, but it lacks much of being all of prayer. (Psalm 72: 20, where David's psalms are called prayers.)

O Jehovah, I have heard the report of thee, and am afraid. This expresses the reverent attitude of

Habakkuk. The "report of thee" probably refers to that which Jehovah had just said to him. Moffatt renders verse 2 as follows: "We have heard thee, O Eternal, we have seen thee in action. Strike now, for the years are passing, reveal thyself now as the years go by, amid thy wrath remember to be merciful."

God came from Teman, And the Holy One from mount Paran. The reference here is not to God's origin, but rather to his glorious manifestations when he gave the law from Sinai. "And he said, Jehovah came from Sinai, And rose from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, And he came from the ten thousands of holy ones: At his right hand was a fiery law for them." (Deut. 33: 2.) As a result of that which happened at Sinai, "His *glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of his praise*" (Psalm 148: 13; 48: 10.) *Selah* was probably a musical term.

Verses 4-6 describe the majesty and might with which Jehovah conducted his people to the land of promise. Verse 4 probably refers to Sinai or to the divine manifestations during the journey. His power was seen continuously. Verse 5 apparently refers to the plagues which were sent upon the Israelites for their disobedience. Verse 6 may mean the dividing of the land among the twelve tribes, and the driving out of the wicked nations.

Habakkuk's Hymn of Faith (Hab. 3: 17-19)

Daniel Webster referred to these verses as one of the sublime passages of literature, while Goodspeed sees in them one of the noblest pieces of Hebrew poetry, expressing that indomitable trust in God—whatever happens—which had been the underlying conviction of Habakkuk. These words remind us of Job: "Behold, he will slay me; I have no hope: Nevertheless I will maintain my ways before him." (Job. 13: 15.)

The entire passage should be read at once: "For though the fig-tree shall not flourish, Neither shall fruit be in the vines; The labor of the olive shall fail, And the fields shall yield no food; The flock shall be cut off from

the fold, And there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength; And he maketh my feet like hinds' feet, And will make me to walk upon my high places."

These words of Habakkuk constitute one of the most determined, the most decisive, and the most unhesitating confessions of faith to be found anywhere in the annals of history. He saw what the results of the Chaldean invasion might lead to, but that was no cause for any distrust in God. He knew that God was merciful, and that the sunshine would come after the rain. He not only was willing to submit to God's chastisement, but would rejoice while enduring it. (Acts 16: 25; Phil. 2: 17, 18; 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

We are told that the hinds make their home in the upper regions of the mountains, and they are relatively undisturbed by the hunter and the dog. When they venture down the mountain-side for food or drink, and are made aware of some danger, they disappear as by magic, as they, with sure and steady feet, return to safety in the heights. "They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. 40: 31.)

Memorable Passages in Habakkuk

"The righteous shall live by his faith." (2:4b.)

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." (2: 14.)

"But Jehovah is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him." (2:20.)

Add to these 1:12-14; 3: 17-49, quoted in the text.

New Testament References to Habakkuk

Acts 13:41 (Hab. 1:5); Rom. 1:17 (Hab. 2:4); Gal. 3:11 (Hab. 2:4); Heb. 10:37, 38 (Hab. 2:3, 4).

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the importance of the time element in seeking to explain a given pHSS386?

What was the background against which Habakkuk began his prophecy?

What peculiarity is noted in the book which bears his name, as it respects other books of prophecy?

With what mental attitude did Habakkuk begin to speak?

What two sublime truths did he utter?

What is the importance of faith in one's life? Discuss fully.

Give a comprehensive outline of the Book of Habakkuk.

The Golden Text

To what extent has this passage been used? and why?

What are some of the chief attributes of Jehovah?

What should every person do when he is confronted with perplexing problems? cf. song. (*What a Friend We Have in Jesus.*)

What promise has God made to every trusting heart? Give references.

Do you see any resemblance between Habakkuk and Job? Give reasons for your answer.

Habakkuk's Complaint About the Cruelty of the Agents

What complaint did Habakkuk make regarding the divine method of punishment?

How was the enemy described? and what did the description reveal?

What contrast did Habakkuk recognize between Jehovah and the Chaldeans?

What did he mean by saying "We shall not die"?

What work did Habakkuk say that God had ordained for the Chaldeans?

How well did they perform their task, that is, How faithful were they?

What problem did Habakkuk see in this? and what did he do about it?

In what way does his attitude illustrate Paul's statement in Rom. 15:4?

What figures were used to describe the methods by which the Chaldeans dealt with the Jews?

Habakkuk's Prayer to Jehovah

What was the occasion for this prayer?

In what sense was the term "prayer" used here?

What report had Habakkuk heard of Jehovah?

What was meant by saying that God came from Teman?

What and where were Teman and Paran?

Consult a Bible dictionary.

What description is given in Hab. 3: 4-6?

Discuss each verse separately.

Habakkuk's Hymn of Faith

What tributes have been paid to this passage?

What is your own estimate of it? Give reasons for your answer.

What is illustrated by the reference to the hinds?

What are some of the memorable passages in Habakkuk? and why are they so regarded?

What New Testament references are made to Habakkuk? and why?

Lesson X—March 9, 1958

ZEPHANIAH PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND BLESSING

Lesson Text

Zeph. 3: 9-20

9 For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Je-ho'-vah, to serve him with one consent.

10 From beyond the rivers of E-thi-o'-pi-a my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

11 In that day shalt thou not be put to shame for all thy doings, where in thou hast transgressed against me; for then I will take away out of the midst of thee thy proudly exulting ones, and thou shalt no more be haughty in my holy mountain.

12 But I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall take refuge in the name of Je-ho'-vah.

13 The remnant of is'-ra-el shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

14 Sing, O daughter of Zi'-ón; shout O Is'-ra-el; be glad and rejoice with all the of Je-ru'-sa-lem.

15 Je-ho'-vah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Is'-ra-el, even Je-ho'-vah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more.

16 In that day it shall be said to Je-ru'-sa-lem, Fear thou not; O Zi'-ón, let not thy hands be slack.

17 Je-ho'-vah thy God is in the

midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.

18 I will gather them that sorrow for the solemn assembly, who were of thee; to *whom* the burden upon her was a reproach.

19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all them that afflict thee; and I will save that which is lame, and

gather that which was driven away; and I will make them a praise and a name, whose shame hath been in all the earth.

20 At that time will I bring you in, and at that time will I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring back your captivity before your eyes, saith Je-ho'-vah.

Golden Text.—*"And 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.—Zeph. 2: 1-15.

Daily Bible Readings

March 3. M.....	Jehovah Promises to Bless Judah (Zech. 14: 1-21)
March 4. T.....	The People Comforted (Joel. 3: 14-21)
March 5. W.....	Cyrus the Deliverer (Isa. 44: 24-45: 7)
March 6. T.....	Return from Captivity (Jer. 29: 1-14)
March 7. F.....	Ezekiel's Prophecy (Ezek. 34: 20-31)
March 8. S.....	Jehovah Returns to Zion (Isa. 52: 1-12)
March 9. S.....	Isaiah Writes of the Return (Isa. 11: 11-16)

TIME.—Probably between 630 and 625 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Zephaniah, Judah, and her enemies.

Introduction

Zephaniah identifies himself in the opening verse of his prophecy: "The word of Jehovah which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah." Although there is no mention in the Bible of a son of Hezekiah by the name of Amariah, it is, nevertheless, generally accepted among Bible students that the Hezekiah of the text was none other than the good king Hezekiah of Isaiah's day. (2 Kings, chapters 18-20.)

If the Hezekiah of this lesson was the king of Judah, then Zephaniah was of royal blood, and his denunciation of the princes and the king's sons was significant. (1:8.) It is hardly probable that the "king's sons" were the actual sons of Josiah, since he was only eight years old when he came to the throne. (2 Kings 22: 1.) They were probably close relatives.

One has only to read of the evils which were practiced by Manasseh and Amon, grandfather and father of Josiah, respectively, in order to have some idea of the corrupt state of affairs which existed when Josiah came to the throne. It would be dif-

ficult to imagine conditions which were much worse. Josiah's reign is remembered chiefly for his great reforms, and it was against such a background as has just been mentioned that he was compelled to work. It is altogether probable that he was greatly aided in this great undertaking by the prophet Zephaniah.

The three chapters of Zephaniah contain only fifty-three verses. The picture which he draws is a dark one, but he expresses the conviction that there is always hope, and even joy, for those who will fully trust in the Lord. Chapter 1 predicts the utter destruction of Judah as a judgment for idolatry and neglect of Jehovah, principally on the part of the leaders. The people had followed them and they would have to suffer too.

Zephaniah warned that the "day of Jehovah" was at hand, which would be a day of reckoning. (Amos 5: 18-20.) Jehovah would no longer tolerate idolatry and skepticism of his own people. The prosperity, security, and insolence of the people is contrasted with the horrors of the day of wrath. (1: 7-18.)

Chapter 2 opens with a call to repentance; and then in rapid succes-

sion punishment is predicted for the enemies of Judah. Chapter three is addressed primarily to Jerusalem. He reproves them for their vice and disobedience, the cruelty of the princes and the treachery of the priests, and for their general disre-

gard for the warnings which had been given to them. The chapter concludes with a series of promises to those who put their trust in Jehovah, which included the restoration of the people from their captivity.

The Golden Text

"And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Inasmuch as Zephaniah and Jeremiah were contemporary prophets, it is fitting that the golden text of this lesson should be taken from Jeremiah. The student should read carefully chapters 30 and 31 of Jeremiah before attempting to explain this golden text. These two chapters give a rather full treatment of the restoration of both Judah and Israel. (Ezek. 39: 25; Amos 9: 14, 15.)

There are certain statements in the two chapters in Jeremiah, which have just been referred to, which make it plain beyond any question that the reference was not to a literal restoration of the captive people to their native homeland, Palestine, but rather to their redemption through Christ. In 30:9 we read: "But they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." "David their king" is, without a doubt, the Messiah. (Ezek. 21:27; 34:23, 24; 37:24; Hosea 3:5; Luke 1:32; Acts 2: 30-32.) The closing words of chapter 30 are, "In the latter days ye shall understand it." The "latter days" are the days of the Christian dispensation; and it is in the light of this that the prophecy must be understood.

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." (31: 31-34.)

If any one is in doubt about the fulfillment of this prediction, he needs only to read Heb. 8:c 8-13. Therefore, when Jehovah said, "And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it," the ultimate aim was to show them their blessings in the gospel, which would be prefigured to some extent by the restoration from Babylon. (Rom. 11: 25-27.)

The Text Explained

The Purging of the People (Zeph. 3:9-13)

For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve him with one consent. The Lord's people, for generations past, had mixed their devotions to Jehovah with idolatrous worship, and that had resulted in a "mixed-language" which was entirely unacceptable to God. Since the time of Babel (Gen. 11: 1-9), sin has always resulted in a confusion of languages. The Jews,

following the Babylonian captivity, were completely cured of idolatry; and that seems to foreshadow the gospel age when all those who are truly converted to Christ will have a common language, entirely free from that which displeases him (1 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 15:5, 6.)

From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. Ethiopia was a part of Africa, bordering on Egypt and the Red Sea, that which is known as

modern Abyssinia. Those who were "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia" were probably those who were farthest away from the Lord. The idea seems to be that they would be drawn to the Lord and would serve him. Suppliants are those who implore or humbly entreat Jehovah. To bring an offering was the same as worshipping or serving the Lord.

In that day shalt thou not be put to shame for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me; for then I will take away out of the midst of thee thy proudly exulting ones, and thou shalt no more be haughty in thy holy mountain. The reason that they would not be ashamed for all their doing was that, having ceased to practice them, the Lord would forgive them. When people are converted to Christ they become new creatures in him. (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:3, 4.) The Pharisaic spirit does not characterize those who are truly converted to Christ, but they, with true humility, mourn over the sinful conditions which had so unmercifully enslaved them. Jesus has promised, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." (Matt. 5:4.)

But I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall take refuge in the name of Jehovah. This appears to have been the condition of the people following their captivity. In the preceding verse they are described as "suppliants", rather than haughty and boastful. The "poor, in spirit" are those who are really ready for the kingdom of heaven; they have been afflicted for their sins, and they are now ready to receive the Lord's mercy. The "afflicted and poor" are in reality the only people whom the Lord will receive; they are the ones who see the need of taking refuge in the name of Jehovah.

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. The "remnant of Israel" are those who are converted to Christ; and it will be to the advantage to consider carefully this verse; for it is God's description of one who has really been converted to Christ. When people do right they can be

calm in their souls. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26:3.)

Joy over the Coming Deliverance (Zeph. 3:14-17)

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. These words were spoken as the prophet foresaw the righteous state of those who returned from captivity, and especially those who will be converted to Christ. There is always cause for rejoicing when sins are renounced and forgiven. (Acts 8:39.) Outward troubles cause sorrow of spirit only when the heart is not right with God. (Acts 16:25; 2 Cor. 12:7-10.)

Jehovah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more. The last king that the Jews had was Zedekiah; the next was Jesus. This shows conclusively that the reference of this lesson is primarily to the Messianic reign of Christ. When the Hebrews were taken into captivity it seemed that Jehovah had forsaken them; but with the coming of Christ he would be present to safeguard them. Their relationship with God then will be in great contrast with their former attitude. (Jer. 44:17.)

In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: O Zion, let not thy hands be slack. Having turned away from idolatry and back to God, they would have no fear of another captivity or national calamity; and, being in the favor of God, they must be diligent in their service to him. The statement about the hands possibly refers, first, to the rebuilding of the temple, and, secondly, to their activities in the kingdom of Christ. (Heb. 12:12; Isa. 35:3, 4.) They must not faint in their service for the Lord. "In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." (Rom. 12:11.)

Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. Not only would they not be forsaken again, but their God would be in the midst

of them, the prevailing One and the all-conquering Hero. He is therefore mighty to save and will cleanse them from all guilt and make them pure in his sight: all of this because he is pleased with them and rejoices over them.

In speaking after the same manner, Jehovah said through Isaiah, "Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shall be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." (Isa. 62:3-5.)

The word "Hephzi-bah", according to the marginal reading, means "My delight is in her;" and "Beulah", means "married". This blessed attitude of Jehovah toward them was the all-important feature of the hope. The term "rest", in the margin, is "be silent" which could mean that he would be silent regarding their faults, since they would be forgiven; but inasmuch as the basic meaning of the word is "renew", the probability is that the reference is to the fact that God would renew his love toward them. (John 15: 13; 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8; Luke 15: 7.)

The Promise of Restoration (Zeph. 3: 18-20)

I will gather them that sorrow for the solemn assembly, who were of thee; to whom the burden upon her was a reproach. (Lam. 1:4; 2:6.) This probably has reference to those devout Hebrews who longed for the worship which they were accustomed to in Judea, but which was not possible for them while they were in exile. Then, too, there were doubtless some who would not assemble when they could, but now that they are not privileged to do so, they long or sorrow for the solemn assemblies.

The reproach may have been that which their enemies heaped upon them while they were in that deplorable condition, and which was a burden to them. "By the rivers

of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept. When we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst thereof We hanged up our harps. For there they that led us captive required of us songs, And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing Jehovah's song In a foreign land?" (Psalm 137: 1-4.)

Behold, at that time I will deal with all them that afflict thee. Jehovah has frequently used wicked nations to punish his people; but when the punishment was completed he always punished the wicked. (Jer. 50.) The Lord, in like manner, has promised to avenge all those who afflict his people in Christ. (Rom. 12:19-21; 2 Thess. 1:3-10.)

And I will save that which is lame, and gather that which was driven a way; and I will make them a praise and a name, whose shame hath been in all the earth. (Ezek. 34: 16; Mic. 4: 6, 7.) The people here are compared to a flock, some lame, some driven away; but whatever be their condition, nothing will stand in the way of their restoration.

At that time will I bring you in, and at that time will I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring back your captivity before your eyes, saith Jehovah.

When the seventy years of captivity were completed, the people were returned to their land. (Jer. 25: 11, 12; 29: 10.) Their restoration from Babylonian captivity may be regarded as a type of their deliverance from sin through Christ; and just as the ancient Hebrews were freed from their humiliation and made famous again (Zech. 8: 23), just so those in Christ will have the esteem of the peoples of the earth. (Acts 2: 43-47.) The expression "before your eyes" has been interpreted to mean that their restoration and exaltation would seem incredible; as if God said, "You will scarcely believe it for joy, but the testimony of your own eyes shall convince you of the delightful reality." (Luke 24:41; Jer. 33: 9.)

Memorable Passages in Zephaniah

"Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord Jehovah; for the day of Jehovah is at hand: for Jehovah hath prepared a sacrifice, and he hath consecrated his guests." (1:7.)

"And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with lamps; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil." (1:12.)

"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath." (1:18a.)

"Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordi-

nances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger." (2:3.)

"The unjust knoweth no shame." (3:5c.)

"I said, Only fear thou me; receive correction." (3:7a.)

"For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve him with one consent." (3:9.)

"Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." (3:17.)

There is no direct reference in the New Testament to the Book of Zephaniah.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

What is a golden text supposed to express?

Give time, place, persons, and show why each is important.

Introduction

Who was Zephaniah?

What did his relation to Hezekiah imply?

Under what conditions did Josiah come to the throne? and for what is his reign chiefly remembered?

What part did Zephaniah probably have in this great undertaking?

Give a brief resume of each of the three chapters of Zephaniah.

The Golden Text

In what way does the Book of Jeremiah aid the student in understanding the significance of the golden text?

How can one tell to which restoration reference was made? Discuss fully.

What was the new covenant which the Lord promised to make?

The Purging of the People

Why was a pure language necessary?

What does a mixed-language imply?

Do we have a pure language today? Give reasons for your answer.

Who were the suppliants? and from where were they drawn?

How are the people who are drawn to Jehovah described?

Who were the afflicted and poor people?

Who were the "remnant of Israel"? and what is implied concerning them?

Joy Over the Coming Deliverance

What was the source of this joy?

Who is the King of Israel? Give reasons for your answer.

Of what were they not to be afraid?

In what were they not to slack their hands?

What is Jehovah's attitude toward his redeemed people?

The Promise of Restoration

What were the solemn assemblies? and why did they sorrow for them?

What reproach did the captives endure?

What promise has the Lord made regarding those who afflict his people?

What is the Christian attitude in this respect?

To what did the Lord compare his people?

When did the captivity of Judah end?

What are some of the memorable passages in Zephaniah?

How are the Lord's restored people regarded? (1 Pet. 3:13-17.)

Are there any direct references in the New Testament to the Book of Zephaniah?

Lesson XI—March 16, 1958

HAGGAI ENCOURAGES THE PEOPLE

Lesson Text

Hag. 1:1-10

1 In the second year of Da-ri'-us the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month; came the word of Je-ho'-vah by Hag'-gai the prophet unto Ze-rub'-ba-bel the son of She-al'-ti-el, governor of Ju'-dah,

and to Josh'-u-a the son of Je-hoz-a-dak, the high priest, saying,

2 Thus speaketh Je-ho'-vah of hosts, saying, This people say, It is not the time for *us* to come, the time for Je-ho'-vah's house to be built.

3 Then came the word of Je-ho'-vah by Hag'-gai the prophet, saying,

4 Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste?

5 Now therefore thus saith Je-ho'-vah of hosts: Consider your ways.

6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except Jehovah keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain"* (Psalm 127: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Hag. 2: 1-9.

7 Thus saith Je-ho'-vah of hosts: Consider your ways.

8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Je-ho'-vah.

9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith Je-ho'-vah of hosts. Because of my house that lieth waste, while ye run every man to his own house.

10 Therefore for your sake the heavens withhold the dew, and the earth withholdeth its fruit.

Daily Bible Readings

March 10. M.....	The Return Made Possible (Ezra 1: 1-11)
March 11. T.....	A Place for Worship (Psalm 122: 1-9)
March 12. W.....	Altar First (Ezra 3: 1-7)
March 13. T.....	Work Completed (Ezra 6: 1-15)
March 14. F.....	Longing for Worship (Psalm 84: 1-4)
March 15. S.....	Glory of the Temple (Hag. 2: 1-9)
March 16. S.....	The Prophet's Influence (Hag. 1: 12-15)

TIME.—520 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Haggai, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and "the remnant of the people."

Introduction

Haggai belonged to the latter part of the Babylonian exile. He was probably born in Babylon, and it appears that he was among the number who came to Judea under the leadership of Zerubbabel. Ezra, chapters

1 and 2. We do not have very much information regarding his personal history, and cannot therefore say much about him before the time of his work as a prophet.

The history of the effort to rebuild the temple, as authorized by Cyrus, and the manner in which the work was halted, are graphically set forth in chapters 3 and 4 of Ezra. Nothing more was done about the work for the next sixteen years. It was at the end of these years of inactivity that Haggai appears on the scene. Read carefully chapters 5 and 6 of Ezra.

Haggai was the first of the prophets of the restoration period. The sixteen years during which no work was done toward rebuilding the temple had dulled the zeal of the Jews,

and they apparently were becoming more interested in their own welfare, than in the work which God had ordained for them to do. Haggai, therefore, was commissioned by Jehovah to stir up the people and urge them to go forward with their work on the temple. He and Zechariah were closely associated in this undertaking. (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1.)

The dates which are given in the Book of Haggai make it easy to analyze this prophetic production. There are four distinct discourses in this book, all delivered in the second year of Darius the king of the Persians. The first one was spoken on the first day of the sixth month (September). It was an exhortation to rebuild the temple, and it stirred the people to action. (1: 1-15.) The second was on the twenty-first day of the seventh month (October), to encourage the workers with a Messianic prediction. (2: 1-9.) The third, on the twenty-fourth day

of the ninth month (December), a parabolic rebuke of their indifference and unfaithfulness. (2: 10-19.)

The fourth, on the same day, Jehovah's promise to Zerubbabel. (2: 20-23.)

The Golden Text

"Except Jehovah build the house, They labor in vain that build it! Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain." The psalm from which this text is taken has the name of Solomon in its title, but its authorship is not definitely known. David may have written it for the encouragement of his son who was to build the original temple, or it may have been written by Solomon himself to show the futility of man's efforts without the help of Jehovah.

This psalm belongs to a group which is known as the "Songs of the Ascents." (Psalm 120-134.) These fifteen psalms, according to *A New Standard Bible Dictionary*, "may have been used by pilgrims 'going up' to

Jerusalem at the annual feasts or songs sung ritually on one of the stairways in or near the temple."

The lesson of this text is easy to understand. It does not make any difference what man undertakes in the way of religious service, it will not succeed unless Jehovah directs it. Any building, the temple, the church, or even a home, must have God's help. The dispensations of Moses and Christ are compared to houses. (Heb. 3: 1-6.) When God authorizes anything to be done, and the work is accomplished by whatsoever agent, then it is God doing it; but when he withdraws his blessings from it, or decrees its discontinuance, there is no possible way for it to succeed any further.

The Text Explained

The Preamble of the Prophecy

(Hag. 1:1)

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month. The term "Darius" seems to have been a common name or title of Persian kings, pretty much as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian rulers, and Caesar of those of Rome. This particular ruler of the Persians was Darius, the son of Hystaspes, and the time of his reign was 521-485, 36 years. The Jews did not have a king at this time, and they, accordingly, dated important events after those who were over them. The month and day, however, appear to have been according to the Jewish calendar, probably their religious year which corresponds with a part of our September.

Came the word of Jehovah by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying. Zerubbabel, the prince of Judah, was authorized by Cyrus, king of Persia, to lead a company of Jewish exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple. He also was made governor of Judah. Zerubbabel apparently was his Hebrew name, while Sheshbazzar was probably his Babylonian name, as Belteshazzar was the

Babylonian name of Daniel. (Ezra 1:8; Dan. 1:7.) Zerubbabel is listed in the genealogy of Jesus. (Matt. 1: 12; Luke 3:27.)

The name of the high priest in this text is *Joshua*. This is true all through the books of Haggai and Zechariah, but in Ezra and Nehemiah his name is spelled *Jeshua*. Haggai's message, therefore, was addressed to the civil and religious leaders of the returned exiles.

The Time to Build!

(Hag. 1:2-6)

Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, This people say, It is not time for us to come, the time for Jehovah's house to be built. This may mean that the people were using as an excuse not to build the argument that the seventy years of captivity were not yet fulfilled. (Jer. 25: 11, 12; 29: 10.) But Cyrus in 536 B. C. had been divinely charged to build the temple, and had authorized the work to be started as soon as arrangements could be made. The work was started, but was halted because of local opposition, and nothing further was done for sixteen years. (Ezra, chapters 3 and 4.)

It appears that the pretext which the enemies used for halting the work was not against the temple

itself, but against rebuilding the city. These enemies had asked to have a part in the work which the Jews were doing and when their request was refused, they then made their charge in such a way as to prejudice the Persian king against all building. If one will read 2 Chron. 36: 17-23 he will see that Cyrus' action was in fulfillment of the prediction made by Jeremiah; and if the captivity began with the subjugation of Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24), then the seventy years were more than over. At any rate, the excuse which the people offered for not building the temple was wholly unacceptable to Jehovah. (Zech. 1: 12.)

Then came the word of Jehovah by Haggai the prophet, saying. The term "prophet" literally means "one who speaks for another"; and the manner in which the relation of Haggai to Jehovah is described in this book gives one of the clearest definitions of the actual work of a prophet to be found anywhere. (Hag. 1: 1, 12, 13.) With Haggai as the prophet, Joshua as the high priest, and Zerubbabel as the governor or civil ruler, we have all three of the major agencies which are necessary for the orderly conduct of a people under Jehovah. All three are today centered in Christ; he is our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste? This is a clear instance of how Jehovah feels about his people putting first things first. Jesus taught, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 33.) The attitude of the people of Haggai's day was in marked contrast with that of David when he said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." (2 Sam. 7:2.) It is never right for people to be more interested in their own welfare, than in the glory of God.

Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. The marginal reading is. *Set your heart on your ways.* Some see in the plural "ways" a double suggestion, namely, Consider what you have done (actively) and what you have

suffered (passively). Jeremiah, in his Lamentations says, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah." (Lam. 3:40.) That should be the ambition of every child of God. (2 Cor. 5:9.) Instead of being grateful to God for restoring them from captivity, they were more interested in their own material comfort. How does this compare with our conduct today?

Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Nothing prospered in their hands while they were neglecting their duty to God. They apparently thought that it would be easier to escape poverty by not building and keeping their money for themselves. Solomon said, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth" (Prov. 13:7); and again, "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want." (Prov. 11:24.)

The same principles which are emphasized here are also taught in the New Testament. Paul, in fact, quotes from the Old Testament in presenting his lesson to the Corinthians: "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work; As it is written. He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor; His righteousness abideth for ever. And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God." (2 Cor. 9:7-11.) (Luke 12:22-34.)

The Call to Duty (Hag. 1:7-10)

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. The expression "Jehovah of hosts" is used four times

in the text of this lesson—in verses 2, 5, 7, 9. This title is frequently used in the Scriptures, and the evident meaning of it is that all the created agencies and forces of the universe are under his leadership and dominion. (Isa. 45: 12.) The expression therefore is used to indicate Jehovah's great power. It was Almighty God who told the people then to consider their ways; and it is he who still speaks to us today. (Heb. 4: 12, 13.)

Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah. The particular mountain from which they were to obtain the wood for the temple is not mentioned here; but in Ezra 3: 7 we read, "They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and food, and drink, and oil, unto them of Sidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar-trees from Lebanon to the sea, unto Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus, king of Persia." Their duty now is clear: Get the wood and build the house, that is, the temple; and when that is done, Jehovah will be pleased and will receive the glory that is due him.

Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. The apparent meaning of this is that they hoped to gain much by neglecting the temple. This attitude, however, did not pass with that generation. There are still people today who are professed followers of Christ who seek to increase their own possessions by withholding that which is due to the Lord. But the greater was the greediness of the Jews, the more bitter was their disappointment in being poorer than ever. People who try this today may think that they are prospering, but poverty in spiritual blessings is worse than poverty in material things. The marginal readings of "blow upon it" is *blow it away*. The idea seems to be that in the providence of God they lost that which they thought they had gained. (Isa. 40: 7.)

Why? saith Jehovah of hosts. Because of my house that lieth waste, while ye run every man to his own house. Here we have the reason for Jehovah's attitude toward them.

They neglected and ignored his house, but they *ran* to their own. The anti-thesis is emphatic, expressing as it does the keenness with which they pursued their own selfish interest, in contrast with the indifference toward God's house.

Therefore for your sake the heavens withhold the dew, and the earth withholdeth its fruit. This was the punishment which was sent upon them for their sin. The heavens and the earth are personified, and the implication is that nature obeys Jehovah. They were shocked at the people's disobedience, and withheld their blessings from them. Verse 11 gives the literal meaning of that which happened. "And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands."

There is nothing more plainly taught in the Bible than that God rewards obedience with his blessings—temporal blessings as well as spiritual blessings; and that when disobedience is rampant in the land, he, to a certain extent, withholds his blessings from men. It is true, so far as this world goes, that the wicked often seem more prosperous than the righteous (Eccles. 8:9-13), but their prosperity is only apparent.

The mere possession of material wealth is no guarantee of true prosperity. Material possessions are ephemeral, and the prosperity they bring is, in the very nature of the case, but temporary. True prosperity does not depend wholly upon the things of this world. Probably it would be too much to say that every famine can be traced directly to the wickedness of the people at a given time; yet, in the light of the general teaching of the Bible on this question, there is sufficient reason, during times of depression, for people to examine their conduct before God.

Memorable Passages in Haggai

"Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, This people say, It is not time for us to come, the time for Jehovah's house to be built. Then came the word of Jehovah by Haggai

the prophet, saying, Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste? Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put into a bag with holes." (1:2-6.)

"For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the

earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations; and the precious things of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts," (2: 6, 7.)

"The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts." (2: 9.)

New Testament References to Haggai

Heb. 12: 26, 27 (Hag. 2: 6).

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is known of the personal history of Haggai?

Give the facts which lead up to his appearance on the scene, and tell where these facts are found.

To what group of prophets did Haggai belong?

What other prophet was closely associated with him?

What was Haggai especially commissioned to do?

Give the general outline of the book which bears his name.

The Golden Text

Who wrote the psalm from which the golden text is taken?

To what group of psalms did it belong?

What valuable lesson does the golden text teach?

The Preamble of the Prophecy

What was the date of this prophecy? and why was it so dated?

To what two men in particular did Haggai speak?

Give some of the principal facts regarding them.

The Time to Build!

What was the occasion for this prophecy?

What was the people's excuse for not building the temple?

Why was the excuse unacceptable? Discuss fully.

What is the literal meaning of the term "prophet"?

What three major agencies are necessary for the orderly conduct of people under Jehovah?

What direct question did Jehovah ask the people? and what were its implications?

What is the meaning of "consider your ways"?

What is suggested by the plural "ways"?

What had they apparently been trying to do?

What is the only proper way to prosperity?

The Call to Duty

What does the expression "Jehovah of hosts" mean? and what is implied by it?

What were they told to do?

How would this glorify Jehovah?

What is the meaning and implication of "ye looked for much"?

What was implied by their "running" to their own houses?

What kind of punishment was sent upon the people for their sin?

What is the general teaching of the Bible regarding obedience and the material and spiritual blessings of God?

How long after Haggai's prophecy before work on the temple was begun?

(Hag. 1:13-15.)

What are some of the memorable passages in Haggai?

What New Testament reference is made to Haggai?

Lesson XII—March 23, 1958

ZECHARIAH AND HIS VISIONS

Lesson Text

Zech. 1: 7-11; 2: 1-5

7 Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month She'-bat, in the second year of Da-ri'-us, came the word of Je-ho'-vah unto Zech-a-ri'-ah the son of Ber-e-chi'-ah, the son of Id'-do, the prophet, saying,

8 I saw in the night, and, behold, a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle-trees that were in the bottom; and behind him there were horses, red, sorrel, and white.

9 Then said I, O my lord, what are

these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these are.

10 And the man that stood among the myrtle-trees answered and said, These are they whom Je-ho'-vah hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

11 And they answered the angel of Je-ho'-vah that stood among the myrtle-trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

1 And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand.

Golden Text.—*"And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem (Zech. 14: 8a.)"*

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Zech. 13: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

March 17. M.....	Judah to Be Delivered (Zech. 2: 6-13)
March 18. T.....	Joshua the High Priest (Zech. 3: 1-10)
March 19. W.....	Christ, Priest and King (Zech. 6: 9-15)
March 20. T.....	Prosperity Predicted (Zech. 8: 1-13)
March 21. F.....	Israel Wasted Because of Wicked Shepherds (Zech. 11: 1-17)
March 22. S.....	Fountain for Sin and Uncleaness (Zech. 13: 1-9)
March 23. S.....	Worship Jehovah (Zech. 14: 16-21)

TIME.—520 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Zechariah and the, angels, who explained the visions.

Introduction

There are few books in the old Testament which are as difficult to interpret as the Book of Zechariah. It is of the apocalyptic type, comparable in this respect to Ezekiel and Daniel. The only other book of the Old Testament prophets which is as Messianic as Zechariah is Isaiah. It has been said that the scope of Zechariah's vision and the profundity of his thought are almost without parallel.

Zechariah began his prophesying some two months after Haggai began his. (Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1.) The conditions under which they prophesied therefore were practically the same. The temple was in ruins, and no effort had been made to rebuild it since the initial work was halted some sixteen years before. Haggai prophesied for about four months, while Zechariah continued for about two years. (Zech. 7:1.) Of course it is possible that they spoke much

2 Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Je-ru'-sa-lem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.

3 And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,

4 And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Je-ru'-sa-lem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein.

5 For I, saith Je-ho'-vah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her.

more than is recorded (Acts 2: 40), but we are limited to that which is written.

We learn from Zech. 1:1, 7 that the prophet was the son of Berechiah, and the grandson of Iddo. Nehemiah (12: 4) says that a priest by the name of Iddo went up with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem, and it is thought by many Bible students that he was the same Iddo as the grandfather of Zechariah. (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh. 12:16.) If this is true, then Zechariah was a priest as well as a prophet.

The Book of Zechariah naturally falls into two main divisions, chapters 1-8 and chapters 9-14. A critical study of the book has resulted in an almost unanimous opinion that the latter part of the book is much later than the first. (9: 13 where Greece is mentioned as a hostile world power.) But even if the two parts were not written at the same time, as some think, that in no way

destroys the general value and purpose of the book. It is an inspired prophecy.

In general, the first eight chapters deal with the construction of the

temple and the resumption of the worship prescribed by Moses, while the last six chapters deal with the future of the Jews and the coming of the Messiah.

The Golden Text

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem" (Zech. 14: 8a.)

This is an obvious reference to the blessings of the gospel which would flow out of Jerusalem. (Isa. 2:3.) Jesus said that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47.) If the entire verse (Zech. 14: 8) is read, one can easily see the idea of the perennial permanence of these gospel blessings.

Joel 3:18 says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall

flow with waters; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah, and shall water the valley of Shittim."

"Shittim" means *acacias*, and the marginal reading is "the valley of acacias", which is in all probability the better rendering. The acacia shrub or tree grew only in arid regions, and the implication by Joel was that even the arid desert would be fertilized or made productive by the blessings from Jerusalem. (Ezek. 47: 1-2; Psalm 36: 8, 9; Rev. 22: 1, 2.) Psalm 46: 4 says, "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

The Text Explained

The Time of Zechariah's Visions

(Zech. 1:7)

Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius. The visions which Zechariah saw came about three months after he first began to prophesy. (Verse 1.) The month Shebat was the eleventh month of the religious calendar of the Jewish people. (Ex. 12:1, 2.) Their months did not correspond exactly with ours, but for practical purposes we may refer to their eleventh month as our February.

Came the word of Jehovah unto Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying. This is a direct claim to inspiration. It is interesting to observe that in nearly every instance the Scriptures record that "the word of Jehovah" came unto the prophet.

The First Vision

(Zech 1:8-11)

I saw in the night. It should be kept in mind that some three months before Zechariah saw these visions, he had preached a sermon in which he called upon the people to return unto Jehovah, with the promise that Jehovah would return unto them. (Zech. 1: 1-6.) Our lesson today be-

gins with the first of a series of visions, eight in number, which are listed in the first six chapters of the book. Their main purpose seems to have been to encourage the people to build the temple.

The people had evidently heeded Zechariah's call to repentance, and they could therefore depend upon the Lord to be with them. Their condition must have seemed rather hopeless to them, but they were assured that Jehovah's watchful care and merciful providence would be in their favor.

And, behold, a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle-trees that were in the bottom; and behind him there were horses red, sorrel, and white. The man upon the horse was an angel of God's presence. We have no further information as to his exact identity. (Josh. 5: 13-15.) The myrtle was a lowly tree in contrast with the stately cedar, and the probability is that the former was intended to symbolize the lowly condition of the Jewish people at the time of this vision. They were in a greatly reduced condition, but the Lord was with them, as he had promised to be, if they would return to him. The term

"bottom" is further evidence of their depressed situation.

The marginal reading of "bottom" is *shady place*, and this may also indicate that the angel of Jehovah was concealed, so that the enemies of his people did not know of his presence. (Isa. 45:15.) The *red* horse upon which he rode probably represented bloodshed or vengeance which would be inflicted upon the enemies of the Lord's people. The horses behind him were those who would attend the Lord in the work to be done. If the red indicates bloodshed and vengeance, then the white would stand for victory and peace, while the sorrel or speckled (see King James Version) would probably suggest mixed conditions, that is, partly red and partly white.

Then said I, O my Lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these are. The angel who talked with Zechariah is thought by some to have been one who was distinct from the one upon the red horse, although it is possible that they were the same. At any rate, Zechariah did not know the meaning of the vision, and he humbly asked for a divine explanation. This is the principle which the Lord has always used in dealing with his people. (Matt. 5:6; 13: 10-17; John 7: 17.)

And the man that stood among the myrtle-trees answered and said, These are they whom Jehovah hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. The lesson here seems to be the same as that taught in Heb. 1: 14, where Paul declares that the angels are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." (Psalm 34: 7; 91: 11; 103: 20.) One writer has put it in these words, They are "God's scouts, reporting the condition of the world."

And they answered the angel of Jehovah that stood among the myrtle-trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. The "earth" has reference to the Persian empire; everything was well with it, but the people of God were still in an afflicted condition. The following paragraph, verses 12-17, should be carefully

read; for it is there that we get the significance of the vision in verse 8. Verse 12 makes it clear that the seventy years of the temple's desolation were fulfilled. The time for rebuilding therefore was ripe. (Hag. 1: 2-4.)

The Third Vision

(Zech. 2: 1-5)

And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. The second vision, that of the four horns and the four smiths, is recorded in 1: 18-21. The *horns* stood for four powers which had oppressed the Jews, and the *smiths* represented the forces which counteracted them. The third vision, which is the subject of this section of our lesson, was that of the man with the measuring line. Read the entire second chapter of Zechariah. The vision of the horns and the smiths was very encouraging to the afflicted Hebrews, and now the third vision was a further encouragement for them to begin their rebuilding.

Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. The Messianic character of the Book of Zechariah makes it necessary for us to understand the language in both a literal and in a figurative sense. Jerusalem, *the temple*, and the worship prescribed by the law of Moses were all to be restored, literally; but beyond that, the spiritual Jerusalem, the church, was the real object in view, and that would be completed with the coming of Christ. (Rev. 11: 1, 2, where the reference was to the restoration of the divine order following the great apostasy.)

And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein. Walls were built around cities in ancient time for protection, and all of the inhabitants were expected to remain within the walls during times of danger. But even strong walls could not protect in the case of very strong or subtle enemies. This was especially true

when Jehovah was the enemy of a city. (See the story of the fall of the walls of Jericho. (Josh. 6.)

In the case of the restoration of Jerusalem, the population was to be so great as to make it impossible for all the people and their cattle to dwell within the walls of the city. They would have to live in the unprotected villages and suburbs of the city. This, of course, was an indication of the great prosperity which would characterize the restoration period. This would be especially true of spiritual Jerusalem. Years before Isaiah had said, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith Jehovah. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not: lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." (Isa. 54: 1-3.)

The growth of the early church was "a spiritual demonstration of the tremendous growth and increase of the Lord's people; and when they are characterized by righteousness, the Lord himself is their protection.

Zechariah is referred to as a "young man". The message which the angel was instructed to speak to him was doubtless for his encouragement. In the New Testament Paul followed the same principle in speaking words of encouragement to young men in the service of Christ. (1 Tim. 4: 12.)

For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her. A wall of fire is impassable, but how much more so when Jehovah is that wall of fire! There is no protection which is comparable to his. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks." (Isa. 26: 1.)

Not only will Jehovah be a wall of protection for his people, but he will also be their glory. "And Jehovah will create over the whole

habitation of Mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be spread a covering. And there shall be a pavilion for a shade in the day-time from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain." (Isa. 4: 5, 6.)

The explanation of the third vision is further explained in verses 6 through 13 of chapter 2. There the people of the captive lands are exhorted to return to Jerusalem, and glory will be theirs in the land of their nativity. This was true of literal Israel, and would also be true of spiritual Israel under Christ.

The remaining five visions which Zechariah saw are (1) the vision of Joshua the high priest and Satan, 3: 1-10; (2) the vision of the lamps and the olive trees, 4: 1-14; (3) the vision of a flying roll, 5: 1-4; (4) the vision of the ephah with the woman in it, 5:5-11; (5) the vision of the four chariots, 6: 1-8.

Memorable Passages in Zechariah

"For who hath despised the day of small things." (4: 10a.)

"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (6: 12, 13.)

"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for every age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." (8:4, 5.)

"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (8: 23.)

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusa-

lem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." (9:9.)

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (13:1.)

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light; the bright ones shall withdraw them-

selves: but it shall be one day which is known unto Jehovah; not day, and not night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light." (14:6, 7.)

New Testament References to Zechariah

Matt. 21:5 (Zech. 9:9); 26:31 (Zech. 13:7); 27:9 (Zech. 11:12, 13); Mark 14:27 (Zech. 13:7); John 12:15 (Zech. 9:9); 19:37 (Zech. 12:10); Eph. 4:25 (Zech. 8:16).

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson? and why the subject?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Why is the Book of Zechariah so difficult to interpret?
What is the meaning of "apocalyptic"? See dictionary, both English and Bible.
What distinction does the Book of Zechariah enjoy along with Isaiah?
When did Zechariah begin to prophesy? and what was his relative age?
How long did he prophesy?
Show the probability of his being also a priest.
What are the general divisions of the Book of Zechariah? and with what does each division in the main deal?

The Golden Text

To what did the golden text refer?
What did Joel say along the same general line?
What is the lesson of the Shittim or acacia valley?

The Time of Zechariah's Visions

When did the visions come to Zechariah?
From what did the Jews count their religious months?

What claim to inspiration was made?

The First Vision

What kind of sermon had Zechariah preached before these visions came?
What was the purpose of the visions?
What was the first vision? and what lesson did it teach?
What request did Zechariah make? and what did it imply?
Show that the Lord has always used that principle in dealing with his people.
What explanation did the angel give?

The Third Vision

What was the second vision and what lesson did it teach?
What was the third vision? and what was its lesson?
Why would the people have to dwell outside the walls of the city?
What is the spiritual application of this vision?
What promise of protection did Jehovah give them?
What were the other five visions which Zechariah saw?
What are some of the memorable passages in Zechariah?
What New Testament references are made to Zechariah?

Lesson XIII—March 30, 1958

MALACHI TEACHES HONESTY WITH GOD

Lesson Text

Mal. 3: 7-18

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 Je-ho'-vah 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 Je-ho'-vah 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 Je-ho'-vah of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you

happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Je-ho'-vah of hosts.

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith Je-ho'-vah. 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 Je-ho'-vah of hosts?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape.

16 Then they that feared Je-ho'-vah spake one with another; and Je-ho'-vah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Je-ho'-vah, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith Je-ho'-vah of hosts, *even* mine own possession, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come"* (1 Cor. 16: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Matt. 6: 19-24.

Daily Bible Readings

March 24. M.....	Jehovah Unhappy with His People (Mal. 1: 6-14)
March 25. T.....	Unfaithful Priests (Mal. 2: 1-9)
March 26. W.....	The Divorce Evil in Judah (Mal. 3: 10-17)
March 27. T.....	Dishonest Giving (Acts 5: 1-6)
March 28. F.....	Making One Honest (Luke 19: 1-10)
March 29. S.....	The Man God Approves (Psalm 15: 1-5)
March 30. S.....	Destruction of the Wicked (Mal. 4: 1-3)

TIME.—Probably between 440 and 420 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Malachi, the priests, and the Jewish people.

Introduction

We have come to the last book of the Old Testament. The prophecy is ascribed to *Malachi*, but Bible students are not agreed regarding the significance of the term "Malachi", that is, whether or not it was the personal name of the prophet, or simply the designation of God's Spokesman. The word itself means "my messenger" (see marginal reading) and it could therefore have been used in either sense. (Mal. 2: 7; 3: 1.)

While it does not appear that it makes any great difference which view is taken, for in either case the reference is to the spokesman for Jehovah; yet in the absence of any proof to the contrary, we shall regard the term as the name of the prophet. Malachi was God's messenger.

There is nothing in the Book of Malachi which, taken alone, would determine the date of the prophecy,

but when it is read in the light of Nehemiah, and especially chapter 13, it becomes quite evident that Malachi prophesied during the general period of Nehemiah. The same conditions are described by both men, namely, (1) it was after the temple service had been restored; (2) it was during the time of unlawful marriages to foreign women; (3) it was during the time when the tithes were being withheld. (Neh. 13: 1-31.) It appears therefore that the prophecy of Malachi was intended to support the reforms of Nehemiah.

Malachi's method of teaching is unique among the prophets which we have studied. His method is known as the "didactic-dialectic", a kind of teaching by means of debate. It consists, first, of a charge, then a fancied objection raised by his hearers, and finally the prophet's refutation of their objection. There are eight distinct examples of this method

of teaching found in Malachi, and in each instance the prophet sets forth what "ye say". (1:2, 6, 7; 2:14, 17;

3:7, 8, 13.) The entire Book of Malachi should be carefully read by each member of the class.

The Golden Text

"Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come" Giving on the first day of the week is a direct command of the Lord to his people. This is the plain teaching of the golden text. No informed Bible student would contend that that is all the giving that Christians may or should engage in; but it is that which they should do when they meet on the Lord's day for worship. The passage now under consideration contains Paul's instructions regarding this collection and the reason for it, while the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians set forth the principles which should govern the Lord's people in carrying out this command.

The lesson of the golden text may very well be described as *the Lord's plan for benevolent giving*. This short statement contains some important facts and answers some specific questions which of necessity must

arise in the minds of those who sincerely desire to do the Lord's will. For example, When should this service be rendered? The answer: "Upon the first day of the week," *every* first day of the week, according to the Greek. This definitely shows that the early church met for worship on every first day of the week. (Acts 20:7.)

Who is expected to have a part in this service? "Each one of you." Every Christian is responsible for his own conduct in this respect. No one can contribute for him. What is each one to do? "Lay by him in store," that is, make a contribution. How? or according to what standard is each one to give? "As he may prosper," that is, according to his gains or receipts. Why is this to be done each first day of the week? "That no collections be made when I come," that is, that sufficient funds may be on hand to meet the needs which may be before the congregation.

The Text Explained

A Rebuke and a Plea Regarding

Tithes

(Mal. 3:7-12)

From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. This had been the sorry history of the children of Israel since the time the Lord had brought them out of the land of Egypt. Ezra had told them, "Since the days of our fathers we have been exceeding guilty unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to plunder, and to confusion of face, as it is this day." (Ezra 9:7.)

Jeremiah's testimony was along the same general line: "Since the day that your father came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they

did worse than their fathers." (Jer. 7:25, 26.) (Ezek. 20.)

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. It had now been nearly a hundred years since the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah had aroused in the returned exiles the Messianic hopes of the future; and since those hopes had not been fulfilled, the people apparently became both discouraged and neglectful of their duty, and had as a result degenerated into a very low condition. This call to repentance had been the burden of Zechariah. (Zech. 1:1-6.)

But ye say, Wherein shall we return? This is an example of the method by which Malachi endeavored to lead the people back to Jehovah. He first leveled a charge of unfaithfulness against them, and then stated their fancied reply to it: "But ye say, Wherein shall we return?" The tone of their reply expresses an injured innocence, as if the great Jehovah had no basis for his charge against them. This shows how insensible to

guilt they had become. Their consciences had become so seared as to make them unaware of their sin.

Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Here the divine messenger refutes their reply to the charge of wrongdoing, and cites a specific example of their sin. They had failed to bring the tithes and offerings. The law regarding the tithe was very specific, and there was no excuse for their disobedience. They were commanded to give a tenth of their income for the support of the Levites (Lev. 27: 30-33; Num. 18: 21, 24); another tenth for festive purposes *in the place where the tabernacle would be located* (Deut. 12: 15-19; 14: 22-27); and a third tenth every third year to be shared with others *within their gates*. (Deut. 14: 28, 29; 26: 12-15).

Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. This accounted for their deplorable condition; and it is always in order for God's people now to make sure that they are honest in their dealings with God with respect to their material possessions. (2 Cor. 9: 7-11.)

Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house. There is one thing taught throughout the Bible and that is that every child of God has a definite responsibility to God with reference to his material possessions. A part of that which we have belongs to God, and he expects us to be faithful to that trust. This is His way of supporting the work which he has authorized to be done. (1 Cor. 9:13, 14.) Neh. (13:10-12) tells us that the Levites and singers had been forced to leave their work and flee to their fields because the people had failed to bring in the tithe to the Lord's store-house.

And prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah 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. This is exactly the same lesson which Jesus taught in Matt. 6:33, when he said, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "These things" refers to the material

blessings which are mentioned in the preceding verses. (Matt. 6: 19-34.)

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. The reference here was probably to locusts and other destroying agencies which were common in that country. (Joel 1:5-7; Amos 4:9.)

And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightful land, saith Jehovah of hosts. Instead of being ridiculed and held in contempt by their neighboring nations, because of their poverty, they would be recognized as enjoying the blessings of Jehovah. (Zech. 8: 13.) It appears from Neh. 13: 12 that the people responded favorably to Malachi's exhortation.

Speaking: Against Jehovah

(Mal. 3: 13-15)

Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee? This was a terrible charge, but the people's sin had been great... This has ever been a common practice among men, that is, to complain of God's ways. The grammatical construction of the Hebrew verb indicates that the speaking was not directly to Jehovah, but *about* him. (Jude 15; Psalm 78: 18, 19.) It is a sad day for any one when he cannot be satisfied with the Lord's way of doing things.

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 Jehovah of hosts. The Jews apparently had a mercenary attitude toward Jehovah and his service, a kind of a bargain which would result in their being well paid for their service toward him. This shows that they were not prompted by their love for him. (Job 21:14, 15; 22:12-17; Psalm 73.) There are still people who possess the same general attitude. If things do not turn out as they want them to, they are ready to exclaim, "What is the use of trying to do right?" Such people have a completely distorted view of God and his dealings with his people. Paul declares, "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good,

even to them that are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.)

And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape. These Jews had failed to recognize the real cause of their unhappy condition, that is, of their failure to bring the whole tithe into God's store-house, and otherwise serve him, and had centered their attention on their heathen neighbors, and had concluded that the latter were better off than they were. (Mai. 2: 17.) "Behold, these are the wicked; And, being always at ease, they increase in riches. Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart, And washed my hands in innocency." (Psalm 73: 12, 13; Eccles. 8: 9-13.)

It is not true that those who tempt God escape. (Num. 21: 5, 6; 1 Cor. 10:9-12.) The Jews of Malachi's day should have realized that the very attitude which they were manifesting gave the lie to their contention: they were tempting the Lord, but they were not escaping. Their very failure to prosper showed that this was true.

The Book of Remembrance

(Mal. 3: 16-18)

Then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another; and Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name. The attitude of this group of righteous people was in marked contrast with those who spoke against Jehovah. The ones referred to in this verse feared, that is, revered, Jehovah and meditated upon his name; and in order to encourage each other, they spoke one with another. When those who are true to God see wickedness flourish, the tendency is for them to be drawn closer together. (Acts 4: 23-35.)

In ancient times the kings kept a record of those who did service for them, so that they might be suitably rewarded. (Esther 6; 2: 21-23.) God also, as the passage now before us indicates, keeps a record of the deeds of both the righteous and the wicked. (Isa. 65: 6; Dan. 7: 10; Rev. 20: 11, 12; 2 Cor. 5: 10.) This is a fearful thought to contemplate. Nothing which man says or does can

escape the attention of Jehovah. (Heb. 2: 1-3; Matt. 12: 36, 37.)

And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. This certainly will be the reward of the righteous at the end of the world; but it appears that the reference is not primarily to that time, but rather to the time when Christ would come to redeem his people. The New Testament teaches that the Jewish nation as such would be rejected then, or was rejected (Matt. 21: 43), and that only the faithful would be counted as the Lord's special people. (Rom. 9: 27.) This is the Lord's answer to those who put their trust in him, while others were employing "stout words" against him.

Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. This is the Lord's way of answering the claim that it was vain to serve him, to those who asked, "What profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?" It will be too late for those who persist in their sins, but it will be a time of rejoicing for those who feared the Lord and thought upon his name.

Memorable Passages in Malachi

"I have loved you, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah: yet I loved Jacob; but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness." (1: 2, 3.)

"Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (2: 10.)

"And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sough a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." (2: 15.)

"For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel." (2: 16a.)

"Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness." (3: 1-3.)

"Then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another; and Jehovah

hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name." (3: 16.)

"But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings." (4: 2a.)

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come." (4: 5.)

New Testament References to Malachi

Matt. 11: 10 (Mal. 3: 1); Mark 1: 2 (Mal. 3: 1); Luke 7: 27 (Mal. 3: 1); Rom. 9: 13 (Mal. 1: 2, 3.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text and tell why you think that it is taken from the New Testament.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the significance of the term "Malachi"?

How do we determine the date of the Book of Malachi?

Describe and explain Malachi's peculiar method of teaching.

The Golden Text

What is the primary teaching of this passage regarding giving?

May Christians give at other times? Give reasons for your answer.

Where do we learn the principles of giving? and what does the term "principle" mean or imply? See dictionary.

What does the golden text contain and what questions are answered?

A Rebuke and a Plea Regarding Tithes

What had always been the history of the people of Israel?

What were they exhorted to do? and with what promise?

What had probably caused their relapse?

What were some of the sins of which they were guilty?

What did the Old Testament teach regarding the tithe?

What happened to them when they failed to bring in the tithe?

Concerning what did Jehovah ask them to prove him?

What lesson did Jesus teach on this same subject?

Speaking Against Jehovah

What was meant by "stout words"?

What had they said about God?

What had they said about the way to be happy and prosperous?

Is it true that those who tempt Jehovah escape? Give reasons for your answer.

The Book of Remembrance

What did those who feared God do? and why?

What does it mean to fear God?

What was meant by the book of remembrance?

In what sense would those who feared Jehovah be his?

What did Jehovah say that they would be able to see?

What are some of the memorable passages in Malachi?

What New Testament references were made to Malachi?

SECOND QUARTER

THE "PASTORAL EPISTLES"

AIM: To study prayerfully and carefully the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, and to discover in the warm and tender relationship which existed between the apostle and these young and faithful evangelists lessons of great value to us today.

Lesson I—April 6, 1958

PAUL WRITES TO TIMOTHY

Lesson Text

1 Tim. 1:1-7, 18-20

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Je'-sus according to the commandment of God, our Saviour, and Christ Je'-sus our hope;

2 Unto Tim'-o-thy, my true child in faith: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Je'-sus our Lord.

3 As I exhorted thee to tarry at Eph'-e-sus, when I was going into Mac-e-do'-ni-a, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine,

4 Neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith; *so do I now.*

5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned:

6 From which things some having swerved have turned aside unto vain talking;

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, my child Tim'-o-thy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare;

19 Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith:

20 Of whom is Hy-me-nae'-us and Al-ex-an'-der; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."* (1 Tim. 1: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Tim. 1: 8-17.

Daily Bible Readings

March 31. M.....	The Christian's Goal (Phil. 3: 7-14)
April 1. T.....	Trial of Faith (1 Pet. 4: 12-16)
April 2. W.....	Christ Our Example (John 15: 12-17)
April 3. T.....	Warnings of Danger (Isa. 28: 1-3)
April 4. F.....	Respect for Law (Rom. 13: 1-13)
April 5. S.....	Maintaining Good Morals (Gal. 5: 13-26)
April 6. S.....	Loyalty to Christ (2 Cor. 4: 7-15)

TIME.—Probably from A.D. 65 to 67.

PLACE.—Probably in Macedonia, possibly in Philippi, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

Four of Paul's epistles were written to individuals—Philemon, Timothy, and Titus. The ones addressed to Timothy and Titus are popularly, if not altogether accurately, called the "Pastoral Epistles," because, in

contrast with Paul's other epistles, one of their chief purposes was to present instruction regarding the training and governing of churches.

It is doubtful if any of Paul's companions and fellow workers had a

greater place in his affection and esteem than Timothy. This young evangelist shared the great apostle's outward labors and intimate thoughts. It appears that Timothy was associated with his spiritual father during a longer period than any of Paul's other companions.

Timothy was with Paul when the latter could not or would not have the companionship of others. He was charged with some of the most important tasks which could be delegated to other men by the apostle; and when the Lord's great ambassador was in his last and most lonely imprisonment, it was Timothy whom

he summoned to console him and to receive his last injunctions.

The great apostle to the Gentiles never paid a greater tribute to any of his fellow workers than the one he penned regarding Timothy: "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so He served with me in furtherance of the gospel." (Phil. 2: 19-22.)

The Golden Text

"Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" The "saying" mentioned here by Paul is "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This is, in reality, a summary of the gospel. It presupposes the existence of the person of Christ before he came into the world. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1: 1, 2, 14.)

"Faithful is the saying" was a favorite expression of Paul's. See 1 Tim. 3: 1; 4: 9; 2 Tim. 2: 11; Tit. 3: 8. His apparent purpose in using the expression was to affirm the truthfulness

ness of the doctrine which he was discussing at the time, whether it be revelation of Christ as a whole, or some particular phase of the revelation. Since the saying was faithful or true, it was, of course, worthy of all acceptation, that is, it should be accepted in its entirety by all responsible people.

Paul described himself as the chief of sinners, that is, the first or foremost—the one who occupied the front rank of sinners. He did not mean by this that he was the grossest or most flagrant of sinners, but rather that he was guilty of one of the greatest of crimes, that of persecuting the church of God. (1 Cor. 15: 9; Eph. 3: 8.) Head 1 Tim. 1: 12-16. The case of Paul shows how all misguided sinners may be saved; for it was for that purpose that Jesus came into the world. (Matt. 1: 21; Luke 19: 10; John 3: 16, 17.)

The Text Explained

The Salutation

(1 Tim. 1: 1, 2)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. This official title is found in all three of the "pastoral epistles," and it was probably placed there to show that these documents were not merely private letters. This evidently was needed on account of the powerful school of false teaching which had arisen in the church in Ephesus and other places where Timothy and Titus were commissioned to work. An "apostle" means one who was sent, in this case one who was sent by God and Christ.

According to the commandment of

God our Saviour. The expression "our Saviour" occurs several times in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and it is applied to both God and Christ. See, in addition to this passage, 1 Tim. 2: 3; 4: 10; 2 Tim. 1: 10; Tit. 1: 3, 4; 2: 10, 13; 3: 4, 6. The title is applied to God as the original source of our salvation (2 Cor. 5: 18, 19; 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4); and to Christ as the agent through whom the work was done (1 Tim. 1: 15; 2 Tim. 2: 10). According to the commandment, God shows the original cause for Paul's apostleship. (1 Cor. 1: 1.) This points chiefly to the past.

And Christ Jesus our hope. This

points chiefly to the future. Our only hope lies in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 15: 12-19; Col. 1: 27.) Paul told the Galatians that his commission as an apostle came directly through God and Jesus. (Gal. 1: 1, 11, 12.)

Unto Timothy, my true child in faith. Timothy apparently lived in Lystra (Acts 16: 1, 2); and since he was somewhat grounded in the faith when Paul visited that city on his second missionary journey, the implication is that he was converted when Paul and Barnabas were there on their first tour of preaching. (Acts 14.) "My true child in faith" and "my beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (1 Cor. 4: 17), can only mean that Timothy was converted by Paul. (1 Cor. 4: 15.)

Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Grace means favor, unmerited favor, a benefit bestowed which is not deserved; mercy is compassion or divine forbearance; peace is tranquility. All of these have their origin in God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's Purpose in Writing to Timothy

(1 Tim. 1: 3-7)

As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia. This statement implies that Paul and Timothy had been together in the work in Ephesus, and that Paul left him there while he himself went into Macedonia. This is certainly a different visit to Macedonia from that one which is mentioned in Acts 20: 1-6. The one now before us seems to have been made between the apostle's two Roman imprisonments.

That thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine. Paul evidently had some specific people in mind, but for some reason he thought best not to mention them by name. Timothy probably knew who they were and it was therefore unnecessary to identify them by name. Furthermore, the introduction of the personal element into a controversy, unless it is necessary for some specific reason, has a tendency to lead toward an irritating effect.

Neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith. To give

heed in this sense was more than simply giving their attention to; it was to give their assent to. Fables were probably traditional supplements to the law, Jewish allegorical interpretations of the law and stories of miracles, as well as certain pagan philosophies. (Tit. 1: 14; 1 Tim. 4: 7, 2 Tim. 4: 4.) The endless genealogies probably had to do with efforts to trace their genealogy after the coming of Christ, which was wholly pointless. Some are of the opinion that the fables consisted in these endless genealogies. Whatever they were, Paul makes it plain that they had no part in the divine plan of salvation which is administered by God in faith. Dispensation means God's plan of dealing with men, the one now being in or according to faith.

So do I now. These words, all in italics, were supplied by the translators, but they seem to be necessary in order to make the sense clear. In light of that which Paul said in verses 3 and 4, it seems fair to assume that his purpose in writing this letter was to provide Timothy with a written memorandum of previous verbal instructions, so that he would have proper evidence of the authority which he would need in dealing with the heretical situation in Ephesus.

But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned. The aim, or that which the charge contemplates, is love, such love as fulfills the law. (Rom. 13: 10.) This kind of love can come only from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith which is genuine. All three of these working together will certainly produce love, such as Paul had in mind.

From which things some have swerved have turned aside unto vain talking. The term "swerved," as the marginal reading has it, means to miss the mark. These false teachers missed those things which result in love; and, having done so, they turned aside unto vain talking, evidently the kind of talking referred to in Tit. 3: 9: "But shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." (Tit. 1: 10; 1 Tim. 6: 20.) It is the greatest of vanity when the things

which God authorizes are not taught, but something else instead.

Desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm. These would-be teachers not only did not understand the law itself; they did not even understand what they were saying about it with such confidence. With a situation like that before him, Timothy needed a letter like this to show his authority for dealing with such false teachers.

The Charge to Timothy Reiterated and Reinforced (1 Tim. 1: 18-20)

This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy. The charge, in a general way, referred to the one mentioned in verse 5, that is, the charge which had as its object the dealing with the false teachers in Ephesus; but it is possible that it also has a wider sense, namely, all that he was telling Timothy regarding the work in general which Timothy was to continue after Paul went to be with Jesus. The charge, whatever its application, simply meant the instruction which Paul gave to his son in the gospel regarding his work as an evangelist. (Cf. 1 Tim. 5: 21; 6: 17; and especially 2 Tim. 4: 1-5.)

According to the prophecies which led the way to thee. The prophecies were probably prophetic utterances which designated Timothy as a man who was suitable for the work he was called to do, that is, these prophecies led the way to the recognition of him as a person well qualified for the work which needed to be done.

We are not told specifically who the prophets were, but when all the facts are considered, they were probably spoken by Silas, who was himself a prophet (Acts 15: 32), and possibly some prophet or prophets in the churches in Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16: 1-3). Cf. 1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 6, 14.

That by them thou mayest war the good warfare. The "them" in this statement seems to refer to the prophecies which had been spoken concerning Timothy, and which had led the way to his acceptance as a co-laborer with Paul in the gospel. These divinely spoken words concerning Timothy would be of great

encouragement to him; and when in later years he thought about them they would continue to stimulate him to greater faithfulness in the Lord's work. The ministry is spoken of as a warfare, and those engaged in it as soldiers of Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 2:

3, 4.) These prophecies, then, would be to Timothy as a defensive armour, and would spur him to great activities.

Holding faith and a good conscience. The term "holding" implies, not simply having faith and a good conscience, but holding them fast, holding on to them. The present participle indicates continuous action. (1 Tim. 3: 9; 2 Tim. 1: 13.) Faith and a good conscience are absolutely essential to a life of service which is pleasing to God; and they can be maintained only by continuing to listen to God's word and obeying that which it teaches.

Which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith. The term "which" points to a good conscience. The false teachers not only did not have a good conscience, but they actually thrust it from them. Paul's indictment against the moral standard of these heretical teachers is much stronger here than in verse 6, where he said that they missed the mark and turned aside unto vain talking. Here he charges that they had thrust a good conscience from them when it, figuratively speaking, had sought to influence into their lives. (Acts 13: 46.)

It has been said that when a life is corrupt, it engenders a doctrine congenial to it; and we may add that it is just as true when one is determined to have his way about that which the Lord has said. If a man will always do that which he believes to be right, while at the same time earnestly seeking to know the Lord's will, in order that he may do it, he will, if he is not already in the right way, find it sooner or later. (John 7: 17; Matt. 13: 12.) But, on the other hand, anyone who will stultify his conscience, in order to have his way about a matter, will ultimately find that he is not able to shake off the shackles with which his sin has bound him. Such people will make shipwreck of the faith, that is, moral shipwreck, so far as the faith of the gospel is concerned.

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander. These two men are cited as examples of those who had thrust from them a good conscience and made shipwreck concerning the faith. It is generally supposed that Hymenaeus was the same as the Hymenaeus of 2 Tim. 2: 17. If this is true, then we have some information regarding his sin—namely, “But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.” (2 Tim. 2: 16-18.)

Bible students, however, are not so sure about the identity of Alexander. Some recognize the possibility of his having been identical with the Alexander of Acts 19: 33; but it seems much more probable that he was the same as Alexander the coppersmith of 2 Tim. 4: 14. It is possible, of course, that he was a different man from either of the two mentioned, but if he was the same as the latter, his character was such as to cause Paul to warn Timothy against him. “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: of whom do thou also beware; for he greatly with-

stood our words.” (2 Tim. 4: 14, 15.)

Whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme. It is not clear as to just what Paul meant by delivering them to Satan. It is possible that he excommunicated them from the fellowship of the church. A similar situation is found in 1 Cor. 5: 3-5: “For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

It is altogether probable, however, that delivering them to Satan meant more than simple withdrawal. It is a well-known fact that during the age of miracles Satan had the power to inflict bodily punishment upon people, just as God exercised his power to bless, such as healing, etc. If this is the meaning, then such cannot be done today. The purpose of the punishment which Paul inflicted was to teach them not to blaspheme. The word “blaspheme” means to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate (Thayer, p. 102).

Questions for Discussion

What is the general subject for this quarter? and the aim in view?
What is the subject for today?
Quote the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Explain what is meant by the “Pastoral Epistles.”
Tell something of the close relationship between Paul and Timothy.
What great compliment did Paul pay him?

The Golden Text

What saying was faithful? and what did it involve?
What does the fact that Jesus “came” presuppose?
What was Paul’s apparent purpose in using the expression, “Faithful is the saying?”
What did Paul mean by saying that he was the chief of sinners?
What does his example illustrate?
How should this affect all sinners?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Salutation

What official title did Paul use in all three of the “pastoral epistles”? and why?
What does the word “apostle” mean?
How was Paul made an apostle?
What use does he make of the term “Saviour”? Discuss fully.

In what way was Timothy Paul’s “true child in faith”?
What do the words in the salutation mean?

Paul’s Purpose in Writing to Timothy

What is implied by Paul’s exhortation to Timothy regarding his remaining in Ephesus?
Why did he want him to remain there?
What was meant by “fables and endless genealogies”?
What was the end of the charge? and how could it be accomplished?
Explain what some of them had done.
What of their ability as teachers?

The Charge to Timothy Reiterated and Reinforced

Was this the same charge as the one in verse 5? Give reasons for your answer.
How did Timothy come to be a co-worker with Paul?
What effect did the prophecies have in his life?
What was Timothy told to “hold”? and what had some others done about it?
How may one always have a good conscience? Discuss fully.
What examples of shipwrecked faith did Paul cite?
What did he do with them? and why?

Lesson II—April 13, 1958

PRAYERFULNESS AND MODESTY COMMANDED

Lesson Text

1 Tim. 2: 1-15

1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men;

2 For kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

5 For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Je'-sus,

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony *to be borne* in its own times;

7 Whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gen-tiles in faith and truth.

8 I desire therefore that the men

pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing.

9 In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works.

11 Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection.

12 But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve;

14 And Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled, hath fallen into transgression:

15 But she shall be saved through her child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Pray without ceasing"* (1 Thess. 5: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mal. 1: 1-11.

Daily Bible Readings

April 7. M.....	Seeking for the Lord (Deut. 4: 29-31)
April 8. T.....	God's Ears Open to Prayer (2 Chron. 7: 13-15)
April 9. W.....	Jesus Teaches to Pray (Luke 11: 1-12)
April 10. T.....	Not to Pray as Hypocrites (Matt. 5: 5-8)
April 11. F.....	Lord Regards the Prayer of the Destitute (Psalm 102: 17-20)
April 12. S.....	Promise of Jesus (John 16: 23-27)
April 13. S.....	An Instance of Modesty (Esther 1: 1-12)

TIME.—Probably from A.D. 65 to 67.

PLACE.—Probably in Macedonia, possibly in Philippi, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

Prayer is one of the greatest privileges which man can enjoy today. Tennyson has well said that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day. For what are men better than sheep or goats that nourish a blind life within the brain, if, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

Prayer is either the primary fact in our experience, or the worst delusion. Prayer is not simply the

stock in trade of preachers; it is "every man's supreme effort to find the right answer to the meaning of life." When the faithful child of God goes to his heavenly Father in prayer, he may be sure that he will be heard; for God does not mock his children by teaching them to pray, and then refuse to hear them. Paul said, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all un-

derstanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

But our lesson for today is also concerned with the question of modesty. The reference here is primarily to the women, but if one will only

consider the facts in the case, he will see that the subject is applicable to both men and women. The question as it is related to this lesson can be understood only in the light of such passages of scripture as Gen. 3; 1 Cor. 11: 2-16; 14: 33-38.

The Golden Text

"Pray without ceasing" These words by Paul contain the same general ideas as those used by Jesus when he taught that men "ought always to pray." (Luke 18: 1.) These and similar passages make it plain that prayer is both universal and continuous, so far as God's people are concerned. It is fairly easy for one to see the general truth these passages contain, but it is not so easy to put the truth into practice. What does the New Testament mean when it teaches that the Lord's people should pray without ceasing? or that they should pray always?

It should be obvious to any thoughtful person that the New Testament does not mean that one should always be engaged in the specific act of prayer, as that act is commonly understood. If that should be done, then there would be no time for other duties which the Lord enjoins upon his people. There should, of course, be regular times for prayer,

just as there should be regular times for Bible study and other acts of worship; but the truth still remains that we should pray without ceasing.

Prayer has been described as "communion with an Ideal Companion"; and with this view of the question, it is easy to see that prayer is not primarily a matter of our talking, God's listening, and then answering, as is so generally assumed. Prayer, as used in the text now under consideration, is more an atmosphere than an act, more an attitude than a deed, more a spirit than a doing something. There will be times, of course, when we should let our requests be made known unto God, but we can hold ourselves in tune with him at all times. We should expose the whole range of our lives to the God who made us, and to seek to allow him to express himself through us. One does not always have to be talking to a companion, in order to have fellowship with him.

The Text Explained

Prayer Enjoined Because of

God's Will

(1 Tim. 2: 1-4)

I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men. The word "therefore" connects this exhortation with the charge which Paul gave to Timothy. (1 Tim. 1: 18.) The things mentioned in this verse constitute the *first* item of that charge. This point may be described as the beginning of the subject matter of the epistle, while the four items mentioned illustrate the universal scope of prayer. *Supplication* means to ask for something because of a need which is recognized. *Prayer* is the heart's devotion addressed only to God. We might *supplicate* men, but we can *pray* only to God. *Intercession* represents our childlike confidence in God as we converse with him regarding the objects of our prayers. *Thanksgiving*

must always accompany our prayers. (Phil. 4: 6; Col. 4: 2.) The evident object of this fourfold enumeration is to cover every possible variety of public prayer.

For kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. The prayers of God's people must "be made for all men." No one can pray earnestly for another and at the same time maintain a wrong attitude toward him. It is the Christian's duty to love, and if there is to be any vengeance wrought, that obligation belongs to God. (Rom. 12: 18-21.) If it be remembered that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy during the reign of one of the most wicked emperors in Roman history, it will be seen that God intends for us to pray for the bad as well as for the good; but the aim of the prayer is not so much for the success of the rulers, as for conditions to prevail

so that the Lord's people may live as God intends that they should. The success of the spiritual reign, rather than that of the temporal, is the object of the divine economy. "Tranquil and quiet" probably refer, respectively, to inward and outward peace, as we endeavor to live before God in all piety, while at the same time commanding the reverence or respect of our fellow men. *Godliness* refers to our relation to God; *gravity*, to our relation to our fellow men. The latter term, according to Vincent, "signifies *reverend* or *venerable*; exhibiting a dignity which arises from moral elevation, and thus invites reverence," that is, respect.

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. This course of action, that is, praying for all men, is good and acceptable to God; because he wants all men to be saved. A group of people exemplifying the traits of character described above will do more toward drawing men to Christ, than the resentful kind who refuse to respect those who are of the opposite way. (Matt. 5: 13-16.) To come to the knowledge of the truth implies that that is God's way of saving the lost. (John 6: 44, 45; 8: 31, 32; Rom. 1: 16, 17; Acts 2: 14-41.)

The Oneness of God and Man's Salvation

(1 Tim. 2: 5-7)

For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men. If there were many Gods, Jehovah being only one among the many, then it would be neither practical nor possible for Christians to pray for all men; there would be too many conflicting interests. But as it is, there is only one true God and it is his desire that all men be saved. This idea is further emphasized by the fact that there is only one mediator between God and men. One Godhead, therefore, stands over against one humanity; and the Infinite and the finite can enter into acceptable relationships with each other, since they are linked by a mediator who is himself both God and man.

Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. The fact that Christ in his mediatorial of-

fice is both God and man explains how he can function in that capacity. A mediator must understand and be in sympathy with both of the estranged parties, and he must be recognized by both and having their interests at heart. (2 Cor. 5: 18-21.) Not only did God give his only begotten Son to become the Saviour of men (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8), but Jesus himself was willing to take the form of man and give himself for their sins (John 10: 17, 18; Phil. 2: 5-8).

The testimony to be borne in its own times. This means that the proclamation of the gospel of salvation through Christ was to be given at the proper time. (Gal. 4: 4.) The facts herein set forth imply, not only the pre-existence of Christ, but also his cooperation in the eternal counsel and purpose of the Father regarding the salvation of the lost race. This gospel, first in purpose, promise, and preparation, was proclaimed in fact for the first time on the Pentecost of Acts 2. (Matt. 16: 20; Luke 24: 48, 49; Acts 1: 8; 2: 1-4.)

Whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle. The word "preacher" is used in the sense of an inspired proclaimer of the gospel, or a herald who made known the gospel for the first time. (Gal. 1: 11, 12.) An apostle literally means one who is sent, and that, of course, was what Paul meant by the term. (Acts 22: 21; 26: 15-18.)

(I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. This parenthetical statement was added no doubt because of the well-known opposition of false teachers, such as the Judaizers, to his claim of apostleship. There may have been men in Ephesus who denied that Paul was an apostle. Timothy had a great obligation to discharge, and he needed the authority of an apostle of Christ to sustain him. The greater part of Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles. (Gal. 2: 6-9; Rom. 15: 15-18.) "In faith and truth" shows the sphere of his work as a minister of Christ. "Faith" probably refers to his personal faith, while "truth" means the truth of the gospel. He himself was faithful in his proclamation of the gospel of Christ. (Eph. 1: 13.)

The Position and Conduct of Men and Women in Public Worship

(1 Tim. 2: 8-15)

7 *desire therefore that the men pray in every place.* "The" men, and not the women are to be the ministers of public prayer. A summary of this section of the lesson shows that woman's positive duty is to make herself conspicuous, not by personal display, but by good works. Her relation to man is that of subordination. This fact has its origin in the inspired record of creation and the fall, while the application to Christians is fully set forth in such passages as the one now before us and 1 Cor. 11: 2-16; 14: 33-35. It should be noted, however, that this relationship does not affect the salvation of the woman; for both men and women are the objects of God's love. They both, though, must attain the supreme blessedness in the working out of the penalty which was imposed upon Adam and Eve. The race was placed under a curse because of that which they did, and that makes these duties and relationships obligatory upon both men and women.

"Lifting up holy hands" has reference, first, to the manner in which the early Christians prayed. It is said that they turned the palms of their hands toward heaven, as craving for help. In the second place, the statement implies righteousness on the part of the petitioners. No man whose hands are stained with wrong should attempt to lead a congregation of worshipers in prayer to God. (Job 17: 9; Psalm 24: 3, 4; James 4: 8.) Those who pray must be free from animosity and bitterness toward their fellow men, and free from disputing, that is, doubting (see margin) or questioning regarding God; they must have confidence in him. (Heb. 11: 6.)

In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety. Instead of taking a prominent place in the leadership of the church and its public worship, the women are expected to adorn themselves in modest, that is, decorous or becoming, apparel, and be characterized by shamefastness and sobriety. Vincent says that the original force of the word from which we have *shamefastness* was *bound* or *made fast* by an honorable shame. Cf. *stedfastness*. It is, according to

Thayer, a sense of shame which precedes and prevents the shameful act. Trench thinks of it as that pudency which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty. The practical meaning of *sobriety* is sobermindedness, or, as Trench expresses it, that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder temptation from arising, or at all events from arising in such strength as would overrun the checks and barriers which shamefastness placed before it.

Not with braided hair, or gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works. Women should not permit these outward adornments to overshadow and de-emphasize the godly traits of character which are in the sight of God of great price. (1 Pet. 3: 1-4.) Godly women should not seek to imitate the woman of the world in these respects. The braiding of the hair, probably with the gold and pearls intertwined, and the costly raiment would have a tendency to pride and worldliness, and would overshadow and crowd out the modesty and godliness which becomes or befits women who profess to fear God. The original word for "becometh" means, according to Thayer, to stand out, to be conspicuous, to be eminent. Good works, and not the outward adorning of the body, should be the distinguishing mark of Christian women.

Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. The reference here is to the behavior of Christian women in the public meetings of the church. The teaching is the same as that given in 1 Cor. 14: 34. It was ordained of God and that should settle the matter with those who respect his authority. (1 Cor. 14: 37.) Women should seek to increase their knowledge (Thayer), but they should do it in quietness rather than in a public participation in the assemblies of the saints.

But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness. The point of emphasis here is that the woman is not permitted to assume authority over the man. It is not wrong for her to teach God's word, but it must be done in a manner which is not at

variance with this prohibition. The reference, let it be repeated, is to the public meetings of the church. (Acts 18: 24-26.)

For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression. These are the two reasons which are assigned for the relative positions of men and women in the public meetings of the church. Man was given the priority in creation; and then the woman was again subjected to man following her deception by Satan and consequent fall. (Gen. 3: 16.) This passage of scripture should be carefully studied in the light of 1 Cor. 11: 2-16, and *vice versa*. When the two passages are considered together, it is not difficult to see the reason for the relative positions of men and women in the public assemblies, and why the women are required to give a demonstration of their recognition of the difference.

But she shall be saved through her child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety. The penalty for the transgression, so far as the woman is concerned, was expressed in Gen. 3: 16: "Unto the woman he said, I will

greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This, however, did not affect her final salvation, but it did relegate her to a subordinate position with reference to her relationship to her husband; or, as in the case of womankind in relation to mankind. (1 Tim. 2: 12-14.)

But the woman, though subordinated to man, shall be saved through her child-bearing, if she continues her spiritual relationship to the Lord. The sphere which has been divinely assigned to her is child-bearing and home duties (1 Tim. 5: 14; Tit. 2: 3-5), rather than a public position in the church. It is possible that there is also a reference here to the fact that the Saviour would be born of a woman, that is, it would be her prerogative to be the mother of the Saviour of men. But child-bearing alone would not save her or womankind; they, *all of them*, must continue in faith, that is, be faithful to the Lord, and love (1 John 5: 3) and sanctification (devoted to or set apart unto the Lord, Heb. 12: 14) with sobriety, that is, sobermindedness or self-control.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Why is prayer one of the Christian's greatest privileges?

Give in your own words a comprehensive meaning of prayer.

In what way does God encourage his people to pray?

The Golden Text

What does it mean to pray without ceasing?

What did Jesus say regarding the same subject?

What is the general assumption regarding the meaning and practice of prayer?

Does one always have to be talking in order to have fellowship with a companion? Give reasons for your answer.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Prayer Enjoined Because of God's Will

What is the force of the word "therefore" in this passage?

What is the significance of the term "first"?

What is the meaning of each of the four terms used here by Paul and what do they illustrate?

Why should Christians pray for earthly rulers? and does their moral condition affect the command to pray for them?

Who is included in "all men" and why should Christians pray for them?

What is meant by a "tranquil and quiet" life?

What is signified by "godliness and gravity"?

What is good and acceptable in the sight of God? and why?

In what way does God will for men to be saved?

How does one come to the knowledge of the truth?

The Oneness of God and Man's Salvation

What is meant by the oneness of God? and how does that affect man's salvation?

What is a mediator and the essential requirements for the successful execution of the office?

In what sense did Jesus give himself a ransom for all?

What testimony was to be borne? and what were its own times?

To what positions was Paul appointed? and what did each mean?

Why emphasize the fact that he was speaking the truth?

Where was his particular field of labor? and why?

What was Paul's desire regarding men and women? and why?

What is implied in "lifting up holy hands"?

What is meant by being without "wrath and disputing"?
 Discuss, compare and contrast, the manner in which women are to adorn themselves.
 What is meant by "shamefastness"? and "sobriety"?
 In what way are women to learn, that is, increase their knowledge in the public assembly of the church?

Why are women not permitted to have dominion over men?
 When is it wrong for a woman to teach God's word?
 What light does 1 Cor. 11: 2-16 throw upon the text we are now studying?
 In what way are women to be saved?
 What is meant by continuing "in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety"?

Lesson III—April 20, 1958

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Lesson Text

1 Tim. 3: 1-13

1 Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 No brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having *his* children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (But if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are with-

out; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

8 Deacons in like manner *must be* grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless.

11 Women in like manner *must be* grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

12 Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well.

13 For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Je-sus.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20: 28.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Tim. 3: 14-16.

Daily Bible Readings

April 14. M.....Aid Sent to Elders (Acts 11: 26-30)
 April 15. T.....Elders Ordained (Acts 14: 23)
 April 16. W.....Elders at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 2-22)
 April 17. T.....Paul's Visit with the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20: 17-32)
 April 18. F.....Elders That Rule Well (1 Tim. 5: 17-19)
 April 19. S.....Titus to Ordain Elders (Tit. 1: 5-9)
 April 20. S.....Peter Exhorts Elders (1 Pet. 5: 1-5)

TIME.—Probably from A.D. 65 to 67.

PLACE.—Probably in Macedonia, possibly in Philippi, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

The lesson for today is one which is vital for the welfare of the church. It is hoped that what is said here will stir brethren everywhere to a greater study of the leadership of the church generally. A considera-

tion of the qualification of elders and deacons should, it seems, follow the study of their duties or responsibilities, but that requires a more extended study than is possible for this time. It will be much easier for peo-

ple to grasp the significance of the type of men needed in these important positions, after they have learned something of that which God expects of them. Too often the qualifications of elders and deacons are considered abstractly; and when this is done, it is difficult to appreciate the reason for these high attributes of character.

The nature of the work which God expects of elders and deacons makes certain qualifications essential. If one will only take the time to read and study that which the New Testament says about the duties of elders and deacons, he will not have to be told that they will have to maintain a very high moral standard, if they are to

succeed in their endeavor to perform their duties and exercise an influence for good among their fellow Christians.

Although it is easy to see that there is a need for qualifications which are commensurate with the position which elders and deacons occupy and the work which they are obligated to do, we must remember that the Lord has not left it to us to name the traits of character which are essential. The required qualifications are given in detail in the New Testament. The passages, in addition to our text for today, which contain the fullest statement of them are Tit. 1: 5-9; 1 Pet. 5: 1-4; Acts 6: 1-4.

The Golden Text

"Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." This statement by Paul was made by him in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders. (Acts 20: 17-35.) Paul told the Ephesian brethren that the Holy Spirit had made them bishops or overseers, and Peter exhorted those to whom he wrote to exercise the oversight. This, then, is the divine arrangement, and there is no substitute for it. This duty cannot be delegated to others, with divine approval.

The essential idea of overseership is that of directing or ruling, and it is therefore the duty of the elders to rule over the congregation. (1 Tim. 5: 17.) But inasmuch as the elders are over the congregation "in the

Lord," it should be obvious, even to the superficial, that the ruling must be done according to the Lord's will. (1 Thess. 5: 12; 1 Pet. 5: 2, 3; Rom. 12: 8.)

But it should also be remembered that the same authority which makes it the duty of the elders to rule, likewise makes it the duty of the congregation to submit to their rule in the Lord. (Heb. 13: 17.) Only the faithful have the promise of an entrance into heaven, and the faithful are those who are obedient to their assigned duties. (Eph. 2: 10.) In congregations which have been fully set in order, the elders have been designated as the overseers for the purpose of directing the work of the church and securing a faithful performance of the work which each one is supposed to do. (Eph. 4: 16.)

The Text Explained

Leadership Is a Good Work

(1 Tim. 3: 1)

Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. The expression "faithful is the saying" is found several times in the three letters which Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus. It literally means a saying which can be relied upon, or worthy of credit, because of its source—an inspired saying.

It is easy to see that the eldership is something which is worthy of one's best efforts. Men are expected to

seek the position, not the position, them. "If any man *seeketh* the office of a bishop." The same original word for seek is found in 1 Tim. 6: 10, where it is rendered "reaching after." This shows what is involved in seeking the eldership. Those who do so stretch themselves out in order to reach that for which they long; they reach forward to and desire most earnestly the great service therein involved. This is enough to show that the Lord expects the elders to be chosen from among those who are endeavoring to prepare them-

selves for the work; from among those who are already doing that which they can in the Lord's service.

When Paul says that if a man seeks the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work, he emphasizes the fact that it is the *work*, not merely the *position*, that is important. There is no original word in this text for "office," but the idea is implied; but those seeking are simply seeking the overseership, or more correctly, the work involved in the overseership. The eldership is a work ordained of God, and that is the reason that it is a good work.

Qualifications for Elders

(1 Tim. 3: 2-7)

A running commentary will ordinarily enable one to get a fairly accurate idea of the meaning of the passage in question, but that method is not entirely satisfactory here. This passage is a good example of the fact that the Bible is meant to be *studied*, as well as *read*; and when that is done it will be seen that all the qualifications herein listed do not fall into the same category. There are three distinct categories in this passage, and if they are studied according to that viewpoint it will be much easier to get a complete picture of the divine standard for elders. The three categories are (1) negative, (2) positive, and (3) domestic relations. The student is requested to keep this fact in mind as we consider the qualifications of this text.

The bishop therefore must be without reproach. Compare Tit. 1: 6 where the word "blameless" is used. The idea is that one is not open to censure, irreprouchable. Such a person does not deserve to be censured, because of any irregular conduct on his part, that is, no one can sustain a charge of intentional evil against him.

The husband of one wife. "He must be married only once." (Moffatt.) "Only once married." (Goodspeed.) If the words of the text are taken alone, that is, abstractly, there is no doubt about their teaching that either celibacy or polygamy disqualifies a man for the eldership; but inasmuch as celibacy, in and of itself, is not an evil, while polygamy is, it is possible that this requirement was intended to counteract the evils of polygamy.

Temperate. Compare Tit. 1: 8 where

the trait is "self-controlled." This means not excessive or lavish, but moderate in his desires, language, passions, appetites, and conduct. **Sober-minded.** "Master of himself." (Moffatt.) The prospective elder should be free from extremes, having a sound and well-balanced mind, and possessing a large amount of good common sense.

Orderly. Moffatt renders this "unruffled," while Thayer has "a well-ordered life." He should be a man of, good manners, chaste, courteous, and polite in his whole demeanor. His entire life should be well-ordered, and his general deportment should reflect the natural refinement of Christianity. **Given to hospitality.** He should make his brethren feel that they would be graciously received in his home, whenever they desire to go for counsel and instruction. He should also be a lover of strangers.

Apt to teach. "Apt and skillful in teaching" (Thayer), "capable of teaching" (McGarvey). The idea is that he must be capable of teaching those who are under his care. It is possible that he might not be capable of teaching in other congregations, but he must be capable in his own. **No brawler.** The marginal reading is "not quarrelsome over wine." It is easy to see that a person with this trait of character could not have a good influence over those about him, whether in the church or not.

No striker. A striker, according to Thayer, is "a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person." This spirit is entirely foreign to the spirit of the Good Shepherd under whom every elder must serve, and after whom he should pattern his life. But **gentle.** "Equitable, fair, mild, gentle" (Thayer), "lenient and conciliatory" (Moffatt). Compare Tit. 3: 2; James 3: 17. He must be considerate, mild, and equitable, and must possess a wholesome regard for the feelings and preferences of others.

Not contentious. This refers to the kind of person who insists upon his own likes and dislikes when no principle of truth is involved. A man like this in the eldership is not only a nuisance; he is a troublemaker as well. **No lover of money.** Not "eager for base gain" (Thayer). He must not therefore seek gain by any base or

dishonorable means. He must not love money in the sense of making it first in his life; he must not be avaricious.

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) This qualification is directly related to the one regarding his being married. Bible students are not agreed regarding that one, as already indicated, but this much can be said with assurance: If a man who is being considered for the eldership is the head of a family, it should be well governed; for one's ability to take care of the church of God will be most apparent from the manner in which he has directed his own household.

Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. A novice is a new convert, and such a person lacks the Christian background and experience which are necessary to stability and the discharge of the many duties which are required of an elder. No man therefore is qualified to serve in the eldership before he has the time to develop those traits of character and qualities of mind, and has gained the experience of leadership, which are essential to the performance of the many duties which are incumbent upon those who serve in this capacity as God's stewards.

The reason for this prohibition is clearly stated in the words of the text. This shows that the position of an elder is one of high honor and responsibility, otherwise there would be no danger in the "young elder's" becoming proud. Pride caused the devil to fall, and if a novice should be appointed to the eldership, he would be in danger of the same condemnation.

Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. "Them that are without" are people who are not members of the church. A good reputation is essential if good is to be accomplished, but if the leaders of the church do not have such a reputation, it would be difficult for the church to overcome such a handicap. There is no reference here to unreasonable people outside the church

whose attitude toward its members is due simply to prejudice. But if there is something in an elder's life, past or present, which unbiased people can take hold of, it can easily become a trap of the devil which can be used for the purpose of entangling the victim, in the hope of blasting his character and influence as an elder of the church. We should not be ignorant of the devil's devices.

Qualifications for Deacons

(1 Tim. 3: 8-13j)

Deacons in like manner must be. This shows that the same high moral standard which is required in elders is also required in deacons. The term "deacon" literally means one who serves. The original word from which we have deacon is widely used in the New Testament and is applied to many people, even to Christ and the apostles. (Rom. 15: 8; 1 Cor. 3: 5.) This, of course, is the generic sense of the word. In its "official" sense, the term is used to designate men who have been appointed for a definite work in the church, which may be described as assistants to or helpers of the elders. Deacons are not rulers in the church; they are merely ministers, servants, or helpers. They have no more voice in directing the affairs of the congregation than any other member has.

Grave. Venerable, honorable, dignified, such as invite reverence or respect. *Not double-tongued.* That is, not saying one thing while meaning another, or making different representation to different people about the same thing, or speaking of the same thing in different tones and manners. *Not given to much wine.* The use of strong drink as a beverage is wholly incompatible with the high position of church leaders. *Not guilty of filthy lucre.* The same idea as that which says that an elder must not be a lover of money.

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. The gospel in its early days was frequently referred to as a mystery, that is, it was a mystery until it was revealed; and since the revelation which had made it known was so recent, it was still, as indicated here, referred to as a mystery. To hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience was to have the truth of the gospel in a

pure heart. A mere intellectual attitude toward the gospel, without a righteous life, was not enough.

And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless. This, apparently, has reference to the investigation which should be made before appointing a man to the diaconate. Any man who is unwilling for such an investigation to be made is not worthy of the place. When it has been proved or demonstrated that a man is blameless, that is, he is not blameworthy, he should then be appointed.

Women in like manner must be

grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Many Bible students are of the opinion that this reference was to deaconesses, that is, to women who served the needs of women in a way similar to the manner in which deacons served. Compare Rom. 16: 1, where the word is applied to Phoebe. In defining the term, Thayer says, "a woman to whom the care of either poor or sick women were entrusted." Any faithful congregation has women appointed for such work, even though they are not called deaconesses; but it would seem that it would be just as scriptural to call them *deaconesses* as it is to call them a *committee*. The important thing, of course, is that the

work be done.

Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. This has the same meaning as that which was said under similar circumstances about the elders.

For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. The service which will be rendered by faithful deacons will not only benefit the recipients of the favors, but also the deacons themselves. They will be made better men and will be fitted for better service. It is possible that Paul meant that they would be in line for promotion to the eldership, but that idea is by no means certain. At least, such a motive as that should not actuate them in their service. The probable meaning is that they would be assured of an exalted position in the esteem of their fellow Christians. Alford thinks that those who discharge their work as deacons faithfully receive "a good standing place," and they would certainly have a well-grounded hope against the day of judgment. Goodspeed renders this verse as follows: "For those who do good service as assistants gain a good standing for themselves and great confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus."

Questions for Discussion

What is our subject for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What can you say of the importance of this lesson? Give reason for your answer.

In what way are the qualifications of elders and deacons related to their duties? Why is this true?

What other scriptures should be read and studied in connection with this lesson?

The Golden Text

When and by whom was this text spoken?

What does the term "bishop" mean?

For what purpose had the Holy Spirit made them bishops?

To what extent must the overseers rule? and what is the duty of the governed?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Leadership Is a Good Work

What is meant by "faithful is the saying"?

In what way may a man seek the office of a bishop?

When one seeks the "office of a bishop," what does he really seek?

Qualifications for Elders

What is the difference between *reading* and *studying* a passage of scripture?

What will a "study" of this passage reveal regarding the qualifications of elders?

What does it mean to be without reproach?

What is meant by saying that a bishop must be the husband of one wife?

What is it to be temperate? Sober-minded?

What is meant by orderly?

What is involved in hospitality?

When is one "apt to teach"?

What is meant by the terms brawler, striker, gentle?

What kind of contentiousness is condemned in an elder? Why?

In what sense must he not love money?

What will one's ability to rule his own house well demonstrate?

Why shouldn't a novice be appointed to the eldership?

What is implied by this prohibition?

Why must an elder have good testimony from them that are without?

Qualifications for Deacons

What is implied by saying, "deacons in like manner"?

What is the meaning of the term "deacon"?

What does it mean to be grave?

What is meant by being double-tongued?

Why shouldn't a deacon be given to much wine?

What is it to be guilty of filthy lucre?
 What is the mystery of the faith? and how
 can one hold it in a pure conscience?
 What should be done before deacons are
 appointed? Why?
 What is meant by proving them?
 What "women in like manner must be
 brave"?

What is the meaning of the term "dea-
 coness"?

Why call women who have been appointed to a certain w
 tee" rather than "deaconesses"?

What special reward will faithful deacons
 receive?

Lesson IV—April 27, 1958

AN APOSTASY PREDICTED

Lesson Text

1 Tim. 4: 1-11

1 But the Spirit saith expressly,
 that in later times some shall fall
 away from the faith, giving heed to
 seducing spirits and doctrines of de-
 mons,

2 Through the hypocrisy of men
 that speak lies, branded in their own
 conscience as with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, and com-
 manding to abstain from meats,
 which God created to be received
 with thanksgiving by them that be-
 lieve and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God is
 good, and nothing is to be rejected,
 if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 For it is sanctified through the
 word of God and prayer.

6 If thou put the brethren in mind
 of these things, thou shalt be a good
 minister of Christ Je'sus, nourished

in the words of the faith, and of the
 good doctrine which thou hast fol-
 lowed *until now*:

7 But refuse profane and old wives'
 fables. And exercise thyself unto
 godliness:

8 For bodily exercise is profitable
 for a little; but godliness is profitable
 for all things, having promise of the
 life which now is, and of that which
 is to come.

9 Faithful is the saying, and worthy
 of all acceptance.

10 For to this end we labor and
 strive, because we have our hope set
 on the living God, who is the Saviour
 of all men, specially of them that be-
 lieve.

11 These things c o m m a n d and
 teach.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teach-
 ing"* (1 Tim. 4: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Tim. 4: 12-16.

Daily Bible Readings

April 21. M.....	Evil Heart of Unbelief (Heb. 3: 1-12)
April 22. T.....	Punishment for Apostasy (Zeph. 1: 1-6)
April 23. W.....	No More Sacrifice (Heb. 10: 25-31)
April 24. T.....	Some Forsake God (Isa. 65: 11-16)
April 25. F.....	A Falling Away (2 Thess. 2: 3-12)
April 26. S.....	Perilous Times (2 Tim. 3: 1-9)
April 27. S.....	Condition of Apostates (2 Pet. 2: 17-22)

TIME.—Probably from A.D. 65 to 67.

PLACE.—Probably in Macedonia, possibly in Philippi, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

The word "apostasy" implies a re-
 pudiation of that which was formerly
 professed, or a total desertion of the
 faith. It further implies that the
 faith which was deserted had been
 fully established, and that the apos-
 tasy in question was simply the re-
 pudiation or abandonment of that

faith or the principles upon which it
 rested. The apostasy which is being
 considered in this lesson was plainly
 foretold in the very words of the
 Scriptures themselves.

A study of the question of apostasy,
 both at the time of this lesson and
 later, is very important to an under-

standing of the religious conditions of our day; for these conditions are the direct outgrowth of such departures, along with the efforts which were made at reformation and restoration. Thoughtful people are wanting to know just why it is that we have so many religious denominations today, when only one church is revealed in the New Testament. A careful study of the leading facts of the apostasies which are referred to in the New Testament will show us what happened to make a restoration necessary; and then if we are willing to go on and consider the facts and principles of the Reformation which began in the sixteenth century, and the Restoration which had its origin in the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries, we will be able to get a much clearer picture of religious conditions as they are now.

While Jesus was here upon the earth he warned his disciples against false prophets, and prayed for their protection from the evil one. (Matt. 7: 15-20; John 17: 15.) But it re-

mained for the apostle Paul to foretell, in language which cannot be misunderstood, the actual departures. While on his way to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey, and with the collection for the poor saints in Judaea, he addressed the Ephesian elders in Miletus, having called them there to save time. In the course of his address to them, he gave voice to these solemn words:

"Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. For I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20: 28-30; cf. 2 Thess. 2: 1-12.) It is interesting to observe that Paul's language to the Ephesian elders was literally fulfilled in the church there, as may be seen by reading Paul's first letter to Timothy.

The Golden Text

"Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching" It should be remembered that when Paul departed from Ephesus he exhorted Timothy to remain there, that he might "charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith"; and when Paul wrote this letter he re-emphasized the charge. (1 Tim. 1: 3, 4.) We learn from 1 Tim. 3: 14 that Paul evidently hoped to return to Ephesus shortly, but he felt that this letter should be written in the event that he should "tarry long." (Verse 15.)

The instruction in the golden text is what Paul wanted Timothy to do, in part at least, to counteract the heretical teaching in the church at Ephesus. This is a lesson which should be emphasized today, for it is a fact, capable of demonstration, that there is absolutely nothing which can take the place of the word of God itself, and sound gospel teaching based upon it, in correcting any evil

which may be found in the church. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

The original word for "reading" (*anagnōsis*) occurs three times in the New Testament. (Acts 13: 15; 2 Cor. 3: 14; 1 Tim. 4: 13; cf. Luke 4: 16-20; Acts 15: 21.) This is generally understood to be the public reading of the Scriptures, both the Old Testament and whatever portion of the apostolic writings they may have had at that time. *Exhortation* includes admonition and encouragement, and is an appeal to the moral senses. *Teaching* means instruction which is addressed to the intellect. "It is probable that this practice of reading with comments . . . may account for the coordination of 'reading' with 'exhortation' and 'teaching' in 1 Tim. 4: 13." (Quoted by Vincent.) The method which Timothy was instructed to use in Ephesus is the basis for *expository*, *experimental*, and *doctrinal* preaching. This, of course, would be effective for counteracting evil in the church and also for building up the body of Christ.

The Text Explained

The Apostasy Predicted

(1 Tim. 4: 1-5)

But the Spirit saith expressly. The word "but" introduces a contrast between the "mystery of godliness," which may be thought of as the "norm of faith," in 3: 16, and the apostasy which is predicted in the first part of chapter 4. Paul had already warned that the departure was coming, as may be seen in his address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, and that condition, of course, would be in marked contrast with the "mystery of godliness" in the closing part of 1 Tim. 3.

That in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. When Paul wrote his second letter to the Thessalonian brethren, he warned of a coming "falling away," in a manner similar to the warning he later gave to the elders of the church in Ephesus; and now he is telling Timothy that the Spirit expressly predicts this apostasy. To fall away from "the faith" is equivalent to abandoning the truth of the gospel. Instead of remaining loyal to the word of God, some will give heed to heretical teachers (seducing spirits, 1 John 4: 1-6) and doctrines inspired by demons. It appears from Rev. 2: 2 that Paul's instruction through Timothy must have had a pronounced effect upon the Ephesian brethren; but it should be kept in mind that sound doctrine alone is not enough, as may be seen in the Lord's letter to the church in Ephesus; love also must fill the heart. Read the entire letter in Rev. 2: 1-7.

Through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron. This shows that *men* were the agents through which the seductive teaching was done. They were hypocrites, in that they claimed to be that which they were not. They evidently posed as teachers of the truth, but they were in reality speaking lies. The "branding" mentioned here was based upon the custom of branding slaves and convicts with hot irons. The flesh affected was seared and rendered incapable of feeling. These false teachers were branded, not upon their bodies, but in their conscience. They were self-condemned, inasmuch

as they knew that they were not speaking the truth. This is made certain by the fact that they spoke through hypocrisy. Paul further describes them in Tit. 1: 15; 3: 11. (Compare Eph. 4: 19.)

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. The form of the falling away which Paul predicted through the Holy Spirit is here described as a spurious asceticism, a false spiritualism. The practice ascribed to them characterized the Essenes during the time of Christ, and strong traces of it appear in the heresy which Paul condemned in his letter to the Colossians.

Two of the tenets which characterized these false teachers are mentioned here—viz., forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats. It appears that their ban against marriage was not absolute, but permitted only for the propagation of the race. The Old Testament distinction between clean and unclean meats was probably claimed by them as a pretext for teaching that the Lord's people should abstain from meats. This false austerity gained for them a show of sanctity while they were preaching heresy. (Col. 2: 8, 23.) Paul, however, shows that they had missed the point completely.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. Gen. 1: 31 declares that everything which God had made was good; and it is still good if it is received as God intended that it should be. (Rom. 14: 14.) The ascetics' teaching against meat as food, therefore, was in direct opposition to the purpose of God. Paul, however, makes it plain that God expects his people to recognize that he is the giver of these blessings, and they are to do that by acknowledging it with thanksgiving. Paul's own practice in Acts 27: 35 is a good commentary on what is meant here by receiving with thanksgiving. (1 Sam. 9: 13; Matt. 14: 19: 15: 36.) The Lord's people should always offer thanks before or at the time of their eating;

for our food is "sanctified through the word of God and prayer," that is, God says that it is good and we acknowledge it through prayer.

The Way Timothy Was to Deal with the Situation

(1 Tim. 4: 6-9)

If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus. "These things" refer to all the foregoing instructions which Paul gave to Timothy, but perhaps more in particular to the warning against the false asceticism. In reminding the brethren of these things he would be a good minister of Christ Jesus. The word "minister" in the original is the same term from which we have "deacon," but its obvious meaning here is *servant*, without any official significance. This is the Lord's way of counteracting false teaching, that is, by a faithful proclamation of the word of truth.

Nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed until now. "Nourished" in the original is the present passive participle and indicates a continuous nutrition on the part of Timothy. It was in this way that he could be a good minister of Christ Jesus. The process was not new to him; he had known it from his earliest years. (2 Tim. 1: 5; 3: 15.) "The words of the faith" are the words of the gospel (1 Tim. 6: 3; 2 Tim. 1: 13), while "the good doctrine" is explanatory of "the faith."

But refuse profane and old wives' fables. To refuse is to reject, to have nothing to do with, avoid. (2 Tim. 2: 22, 23; Tit. 3: 10.) The word "profane" literally means something which is unhallowed or common. (1 Tim. 6: 20; 2 Tim. 2: 16.) When the term is applied to people, it means the ungodly. (1 Tim. 1: 9; Heb. 12: 16.) The "fables" were probably the fictions or inventions "concerning the emanations and orders of the aeons" (Thayer) of the false teachers of Ephesus. They were called "old wives' fables" because they were such as old women regarded as important, but they were profane because they led away from godliness and all that is pleasing to God. Paul frequently referred to such fables in his letters to Timothy and Titus.

And exercise thyself unto godliness.

The term "exercise" is from *gumnaze* (compare our word gymnasium), and as used here it refers to the practice whereby one seeks to become godly. It is as if Paul said to Timothy, "Let your self-discipline be with a view to godliness, rather than in the ascetical exercises of the false teachers." In other words, Timothy was to meet the spurious asceticism of the heretics by exercising himself in the practical piety of the Christian life.

For bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come. Bible students are not agreed regarding the precise meaning which Paul meant to convey by "bodily exercise." Some hold that he was talking about physical exercise, as that expression is commonly understood, while others are of the opinion that he referred to the ascetic practices of the false teachers under consideration. The latter viewpoint seems more reasonable, since that was the question he was discussing.

Paul elsewhere concedes that bodily discipline is profitable as a temporary measure, as one seeks to increase in godliness (Acts 13: 3; 1 Cor. 7: 5, 7; cf. 1 Cor. 9: 25-27), but he does not teach that these things are to be regarded as an end within themselves. Bodily exercise, therefore, as a means to godliness does have some value, but godliness itself, which is but another name for piety or the Christian life, is valuable for all things. It makes a better person out of the individual in all respects, carrying with it, as it does, the promise of the life which now is (Matt. 6: 25-33), and of that which is to come (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance. The saying to which primary reference is made is probably that contained in verse 8, although it is true of all that Paul wrote. (1 Tim. 1: 15.)

The End in View

(1 Tim. 4: 10, 11)

For to this end we labor and strive. That is, with a view toward a life of godliness, so that they might live a righteous life here, and have a home with God in the world to come. Paul's entire life as a Christian is but a confirmation of this assertion. "Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether

at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him." (2 Cor. 5: 9.) The words *labor* and *strive* both denote strenuous and painful efforts on the part of Paul. The apostle used the same combination in Col. 1: 29: "Whereunto I labor also, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." (2 Cor. 6: 4-10.)

Because we have our hope set on the living God. Paul always had a goal before him, something toward which he worked; and all of his activities were motivated by his hope in the living God. The Lord had saved him from sin, and had promised him a home in heaven; and he had every confidence in that promise, so much so that he was willing to suffer for the cause of Christ. "For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1: 12.)

Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. God is *potentially* the Saviour of all men. He has provided salvation for all, and has made it plain that he wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9), but it is not true that he will save all men regardless of their attitude toward him. He is *potentially* the Saviour of all men, but he *actually* saves "them that believe."

When Jesus commissioned his disciples to try to win the world for him, he said, "Go ye into all the world,

and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) Later on, Paul said, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." (Tit. 2: 11-14.) These passages plainly show that salvation is conditional: God will save all who will do their part, that is, that which they are commanded to do. (Heb. 5: 8, 9.)

These things command and teach. From the standpoint of time, *teaching* precedes *commanding*; but since the term "command" can be used only in relation to fundamentals which have already been recognized and accepted as true, it was proper, of course, for Timothy to command them to heed those things, and to teach them regarding the consequences which would follow their reaction to the commandment. The teacher of God's word is authorized to make the will of the Lord known, and to warn and encourage all who listen to his teaching.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is implied by the term "apostasy"?

In what way was "an apostasy predicted"?

Why is a study of this lesson important?

What are some of the apostasies which were foretold in the New Testament?

What great movements were inaugurated in an effort to correct them?

What warning did Paul give the Ephesian elders?

The Golden Text

What did Paul exhort Timothy to do when the former was leaving Ephesus?

Did Paul plan to be away from Ephesus very long?

What was the purpose of the instruction contained in the golden text?

What application does it have for us today?

What is the only sound way to correct evils in the church?

What reading was Timothy exhorted to do? What exhortation? What teaching?

What type of preaching does this method suggest?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Apostasy Predicted

What does the term "but" in verse 1 introduce?

How would this falling away be brought about?

What is meant by falling away from the faith?

What was the condition of the Ephesian church when the letter of Rev. 2 was written?

How was the seductive teaching which brought about the apostasy done?

How were these false teachers branded in their own conscience?

What were some of the tenets of the false teachers?

What did they hope to gain by this false austerity?

What was Paul's reply to their spurious asceticism?

What should people always do when they eat their food?

The Way Timothy Was to Deal
with the Situation

What were the "things" concerning which
Timothy was to remind the brethren?
In what sense would he be a good minister?
What is meant by being nourished in the
words of the faith?
How was Timothy to regard profane and
old wives' fables?
In what way was he to exercise himself?

What kind of exercise did Paul contrast
with godliness?
In what way is bodily exercise profitable?
Discuss fully.
What saying did Paul say was faithful?

The End in View

Toward what end did Paul and Timothy
labor and strive?
What motivated all of Paul's action?
In what way is God the Saviour of all
men? and specially of them that believe?

Lesson V—May 4, 1958

CARE OF NEEDY WIDOWS

Lesson Text

1 Tim. 5: 3-16

3 Honor widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth.

7 These things also command, that they may be without reproach.

8 But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, *having been* the wife of one man,

10 Well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers,

if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work.

11 But younger widows refuse: for when they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry;

12 Having condemnation, because they have rejected their first pledge.

13 And withal they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

14 I desire therefore that the younger *widows* marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling:

15 For already some are turned aside after Satan.

16 If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always"* (Mark 14: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Tim. 5: 17-25.

Daily Bible Readings

April 28. M..... Not to Oppress the Poor (Deut. 24: 12-16)
April 29. T..... Fatherless and Widow (Deut. 14: 28, 29)
April 30. W..... Food to Be Left for Poor Widows (Deut. 24: 17-21)
May 1. T..... Jehovah Judges the Poor (Psalm 72: 2-14)
May 2. F..... A Poor Widow (1 Kings 17: 12-24)
May 3. S..... Dorcas, a Good Woman (Acts 9: 36-43)
May 4. S..... Fatherless and Widows to Be Visited (James 1: 18-27)

TIME.—Probably from A.D. 65 to 67.

PLACE.—Probably in Macedonia, possibly in Philippi, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

The care of needy widows was the occasion of one of the early problems of the primitive church. "Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word." (Acts 6: 1-4.)

This saying pleased the entire multitude, and in due time seven men were chosen and placed in charge of this work. There are three important lessons which should be learned and remembered just here. First, the needy widows should be cared for; second, those whose business it is to

teach the word of God should not be charged with the responsibility, if there are others who can do the benevolent work; third, men should be selected by the church for that and similar responsibilities.

Later on, when the church was fully set in order, so that it could continue to function in the absence of the personal direction of the apostles, we find elders and deacons. (Phil. 1: 1; 1 Tim. 3: 1-13.) The elders were charged with the responsibility of feeding the flock and overseeing the work in general, while the deacons were designated as their helpers or assistants. It is generally supposed that the seven of Acts 6 were the first deacons to be appointed, although they are nowhere referred to as deacons. It might be observed that the disciples were not called Christians for several years (see Acts 11: 26), but that does not mean that they were not Christians before that time; they simply were not *called* Christians. The same thing is probably true of the deacons.

The Golden Text

"For ye have the poor always with you, and whosoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always" The setting of this golden text is in that matchless story of Mary's devotion to Christ, following the raising of her brother from the dead, and the criticism of Judas (John 12: 4, 5) for the lavish offering bestowed upon Jesus. When the Lord heard the murmur against Mary, he said, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whosoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying. And verily I say unto you, Whosoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark 14: 6-9; John 12: 1-8.)

The Bible, both Testaments, abounds in teaching regarding the poor. The Lord has always expected

his people to show kindness toward the unfortunate; but we should learn from the golden text that help bestowed upon the needy must not be at the expense of our duty to the Lord. It is only when people have the right attitude toward both the Lord and the needy, that real benefit is received by those in need. No one can be true to Christ and at the same time turn a deaf ear to the cries of those in distress.

There are three great responsibilities resting upon every faithful congregation of Christians, namely, self-edification or building up the church itself; preaching the gospel to the lost; and helping those in need. In speaking of this last obligation, Paul says, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith." (Gal. 6: 10.) Paul emphasized this type of service throughout his career as a gospel preacher. (Gal. 2: 10; 1 Cor. 16: 1-4; Rom. 15: 25, 26.)

The Text Explained

Honor Worthy Widows

(1 Tim. 5: 3-8)

Honor widows that are widows indeed. The word "honor" is used here not only in the sense of veneration and esteem, but also with the idea of financial support. (Acts 28: 10.) Later on in this section, Paul will tell what he means by a "widow indeed," and in what way they are to be cared for.

But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God. One of the cardinal principles of Christianity is individual responsibility. Therefore, if a widow has children or grandchildren who are able to support her, that is their duty, and not that of the church as a whole. The word "piety" carries with it the idea of filial respect and dutifulness. Paul says that this is acceptable in the sight of God. (Mark 7: 10-13.)

Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. This passage shows something of what Paul means by a "widow indeed." The word "desolate" means that she is completely or entirely bereaved, that is, she has no close relatives to care for her. But on the other hand, she has something which commends her to the Lord and his people: she has her hope set on God, and continues her supplications and prayers night and day. (Luke 2: 36, 37.) God does not turn a deaf ear to a person like this (Isa. 26: 3, 4; Psalm 84: 11; Phil. 4: 6, 7), and he has ordained that his people, the church, should act as his agent in supplying such needs.

But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth. The word for "pleasure," as used here, is found in only one other place in the New Testament—James 5: 5: "Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter." To live in pleasure, then, is to satisfy one's earthly desires, that is, to live for those things which satisfy. A person like this stands in marked contrast with the

one who has "her hope set on God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." To be dead while she lives is to be dead in spirit while alive in the flesh. (Rev. 3: 1.) A widow with this attitude does not deserve the support of the church, and it would not be right for the congregation to give such service.

These things also command, that they may be without reproach. While "these things" may include all that has been said thus far, the following verse suggests that the particular reference is to that which was said in verse 4. Of course, the church as a whole has a great responsibility, and Paul may have referred to that too. It would be easy for a congregation to be worthy of reproach if they failed to provide for widows indeed, or if they pampered idleness by caring for those widows who were giving themselves to pleasure.

But if any provideth not for his own, and especially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. This verse unquestionably reverts to verse 4, where the duty of children or grandchildren toward their widowed parents was pointed out. The primary reference is to one's own widows, or the widows of his own household, although the same would be true of any other members of his family or household.

James 2: 14-26 shows that faith demands works on the part of those who profess to follow its teaching. One, therefore, who refuses to perform those natural duties which faith requires, has, for all practical purposes, denied his possession of faith, and has even turned his back upon the gospel itself. Bengel avers that "faith does not abolish natural duties, but perfects and strengthens them." Such a person is worse than an unbeliever, because an unbeliever would care for his needy widows. (Matt. 5: 46, 47.)

Regulations for Enrolling Widows

(1 Tim. 4: 9, 10)

Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old. That is, under sixty years old. This remark presents a situation which is extremely difficult to understand. Many Bible students, including Robert Milligan, are of the opinion that verses

9-15 set forth inspired instruction regarding deaconesses. This, however, is not certain. Many congregations have their financial problems to deal with, and while benevolence itself may be indiscriminating, it still remains true that the average church can become responsible for the whole support of only a limited number of such widows. It is hardly reasonable to suppose that an exception could not be made for a younger widow in extreme need; but as a working basis, the age limit was set at sixty. Furthermore, it might be supposed that widows younger than that age might be able to do something toward their own support.

Having been the wife of one man. Unless these qualifications for the enrollment of widows on the church list had something to do with their appointment as deaconesses, which is not probable, then the evident reason for requiring them to meet such a high standard was to keep the church from suffering reproach for encouraging character and conduct in widows which were not becoming to Christianity. The same principle of the married relationship which applies to men who are appointed to the eldership are also applied to widows who are to be supported by the church.

Well reported of for good works. Widows who are supported by the church must not only avoid sin, they must have a well attested record for good works. (1 Tim. 3: 7.) The following examples illustrate that which Paul meant by good works. *If she hath brought up children*, That is, if she has reared children, either those of her own or those entrusted to her care. *If she hath used hospitality to strangers.* (1 Tim. 3: 2; Heb. 13: 2.)

If she hath washed the saints' feet. This kind of service was habitually performed in eastern countries, in the time of Christ and the early church, where people customarily wore sandals or walked with bare feet. Feet-washing was both an act of kindness and humility. (John 13: 1-11.) This service was done by individuals in the homes or dwelling-places, and was never authorized as a church ordinance. *If she hath relieved the afflicted.* This could be done by ministering to their needs, and by words of counsel and encouragement. *If she hath diligently followed every*

good work. This appears to be a comprehensive statement, involving good works of every kind which women could do.

Concerning Younger Widows

(1 Tim. 5: 11-16)

But younger widows refuse: for when they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry. The original word for "wanton" (*katastrēniao*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, according to Thayer, "to feel the impulse of sexual desire." This is why they desire to marry; and, with that in mind, they would no longer want to give their full time to Christ and to the church, which Paul considered to be against Christ, that is, they had turned from that which they promised to do when they were placed on the church roll for honor and support: hence, *having condemnation, because they have rejected their first pledge.* Widows who thus turned away from the work which they had promised or pledged to do would have a sense of guilt or suffer condemnation. The word for "pledge" (margin, "faith") is from *pistis*, which Thayer renders "plighted faith," which means to bind by a pledge or promise.

And withal they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. The idea seems to be that if these younger widows were supported by the church, without having the settled principles which are normally associated with age and experience, they would give themselves up to idleness. Thus, with nothing which they considered pressing duties, it would be easy for them to learn to be idle; and with that kind of an attitude, they would find themselves "gofng about from house to house." And as one step leads to another, idleness would soon lead to tattling, and that, in turn, would cause them to become busybodies, that is, busy about other people's affairs; and this continual meddling would lead them to speak things which they ought not. Theophylact says, "They carry the affairs of this house to that, and of that to this: they tell the affairs of all to all." (2 Thess. 3: 11.)

I desire therefore that the younger

widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling. The word "therefore" connects that which has just been said with that which is stated in this verse, and that fact makes it certain that Paul was talking about young *widows* and not young *women* in general, as might be inferred from the marginal reading. Young widows, accordingly, are urged to marry, rather than to assume a position in the church which they might disgrace by the conduct which is described in verses 11-13. (Compare 1 Cor. 7: 8, 9, and especially 26.)

The duties which are detailed in this verse are those which go with a normal household; and if they are carefully followed, there will be no occasion for the adversary to speak reproachfully. Bengel adds this interesting comment concerning the adversary: Who is eager to exaggerate the vices of a few, and to impute them to the whole church and its doctrine. (Tit. 2: 5, 8, 10.)

For already some are turned aside after Satan. The reference here is to some of the younger widows. Instead of holding fast to the Lord, they yielded to the seduction of Satan. Paul does not specify just what they had done, but the implication is that they had been guilty of the sins which he described above. But whatever their sin was, it appears that it was something which was worse than remarriage, that is, if they had remarried and followed the

teaching of verse 14, they would not have been charged with following after Satan.

If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. Meyer suggests that the reason the woman and not the man is called upon to assume the responsibility of caring for the widows related to them is that she had that duty of seeing after those in the household. That may or may not be the reason for the particular way in which Paul expressed this obligation. It may have been due to the fact that he had been discussing the question from the standpoint of the woman. At any rate, we know from verses 4 and 8 that both men and women have a responsibility in the matter of supporting needy widows.

Throughout the whole discussion of this problem, the apostle Paul, in keeping with the general teaching of the Scriptures, emphasizes the fact that men and women who are able to work should have something definite to do, and should labor industrially, not only to make a living for themselves, but also to aid others (Eph. 4: 28), and especially those who by the ties of nature are dependent upon them. Furthermore, it is the duty of the church, through the overseers, to require all to work and to discharge the duties which they owe to their families and kindred. (2 Thess. 3: 10-12.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

When did the care of needy widows first become prominent in the church?

What was done about the problem then?

What lessons should we learn from that incident?

Do you think that the seven who were appointed to look after the needy widows in the Jerusalem church were deacons? Give reasons for your answer.

The Golden Text

Who spoke the words of the golden text? and upon what occasion?

What application does this golden text have to us today?

What three great responsibilities rest upon the church?

What emphasis did Paul give regarding the poor?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Honor Worthy Widows

What does the word "honor" in this connection mean?

Why should children or grandchildren support their dependent widowed mother or grandmother? What principle of Christianity applies here?

What did Paul mean by a widow indeed?

What is implied by the term "desolate"?

What should a widow of this type do continually? Why?

What do continual supplications and prayers imply?

What about the widow who gives herself to pleasure? Why is this true?

What charge did Paul give to Timothy regarding these things? Why?

What about the man who does not provide for his own dependents? Why is this true?

How does one deny the faith? Discuss fully.

Regulations for Enrolling Widows

What age limit was given and why?

Why say, Having been the wife of one man?

What good works must have characterized such a person?

Are such good works still necessary on the part of widows who are to be supported by the church? Give reasons for your answer.

Concerning Younger Widows

Why refuse to support fully younger widows?

Is it wrong for them to remarry?

What condemnation would they have?

What was their first pledge?

What would fully supported young widows be in danger of doing?

How would they learn to be idle?

What is meant by tattling? Busybody?

What was Paul's desire regarding these younger widows?

Are such women obligated, in the light of this passage, to remarry? Give reason for your answer.

What had some already done?

What did it mean to turn aside after Satan?

What should any believing woman do regarding her widows? Why?

What is the obligation, in the light of the Scriptures, of every able bodied man and woman? Why?

What obligation rests upon the church in this respect? Why is this true?

Lesson VI—May 11, 1958

A TRUST COMMITTED TO TIMOTHY

Lesson Text

1 Tim. 6: 11-21

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses.

13 I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Je'-sus, who before Pon'-tius Pi'-late witnessed the good confession;

14 That thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Je'-sus Christ:

15 Which in its own times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see:

to whom *be* honor and power eternal. A-men'.

17 Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is *life* indeed.

20 O Tim'-o-thy, guard that which is committed unto *thee*, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called;

21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith.

Grace be with you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1: 12b.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—1 Tim. 6: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

May 5. M.	.....	The Call of Duty (Acts 21: 10-15)
May 6. T.	.....	Courage Required (Acts 21: 27-34)
May 7. W.	.....	Selflessness (Rom. 9: 1-5)
May 8. T.	.....	Conviction (Acts 20: 22-27)
May 9. F.	.....	Following Christ (John 15: 18-25)
May 10. S.	.....	Loyalty to Christ (Matt. 10: 34-39)
May 11. S.	.....	Paul's Confidence in Timothy (Phil. 2: 19-24)

TIME.—Probably from A.D. 65 to 67.

PLACE.—Probably in Macedonia, possibly in Philippi, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

Our lesson today is the last in this series on First Timothy, a letter which Paul wrote to his son in the gospel. Timothy was one of the apostle's most trusted companions in the kingdom of Christ, and the church in Ephesus was the congregation with which Paul labored the longest, having remained there about three years. The letter itself is relatively short, but it contains much valuable information regarding the training and governing of churches.

The entire letter which we know as First Timothy might be referred to as Paul's charge to Timothy. It begins with a charge, and it closes with a charge. The church in Ephesus was faced with some great problems, and Timothy was the man whom Paul selected to deliver the instruction which, if followed, would solve all those problems. This letter should be studied in great detail by the leaders of every congregation, and

its truths should be impressed upon every individual Christian.

The church in Ephesus is unique, in many respects, among the churches of the New Testament. We learn of its beginning in the first part of the 19 chapter of Acts; and, as already observed, Paul remained with the brethren there for approximately three years. It was during the latter part of this stay that Paul wrote our First Corinthians, one of the greatest letters in all Christian literature. While on his way to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey, and with the collection for the Jerusalem saints, he addressed the Ephesian elders at Miletus. While in his first Roman imprisonment, he wrote the letter which we know as Ephesians, a letter which contains some of the profoundest thoughts ever given through human agency. And finally, the church in Ephesus was the recipient of a letter from the Lord himself. (Rev. 2: 1-7.)

The Golden Text

"For I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." The words of this text are a splendid declaration of Paul's unflinching confidence in the Saviour of men. They were calmly and deliberately written in the face of death and furnish a noteworthy example of the importance of sound doctrine; for without this, the warmest emotions regarding God and things divine cannot rest upon the solid foundation of eternal truth. (Rom. 10: 1-3.) Before one can know "whom" he believes, he must know something about "him" in whom his faith is centered.

Paul did not claim to know everything, but that which he did know made him enthusiastic both in his labors for and his trust in the Lord. From the day of his conversion he

put his trust in the Lord, and never ceased to labor in behalf of the greatest of all causes, as long as he was permitted to live.

The order in which the golden text is expressed suggests the truth which it contains. It naturally breaks itself up into three distinct and primary parts—viz: (1.) "I know him"; (2) "whom I have believed"; (3) "and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." The middle expression explains the two extremes, or, to express the same thing in other words, the middle expression is the seed, of which the others are the fruits—the cause, of which the others are the effects. We begin with belief and pass to knowledge and persuasion, or, we begin with faith and advance to experience and assurance.

The Text Explained

Principles for Timothy's Guidance

(1 Tim. 6: 11-16)

But thou, O man of God, flee these things. The expression "man of God" evidently is used in the sense of one who is devoted to the service of God,

in contrast with those who are devoted to the world and its affairs, referred to in the preceding verses. A "man of God" in the Old Testament frequently referred to a prophet whom God had sent to teach the

people. The expression occurs again in 2 Tim. 3: 17 where its meaning appears to be extended to include any man who is faithful to the Lord. The things which Timothy was exhorted to flee are those things mentioned in the preceding paragraph, particularly the love of money. It has been said that the love of money in ministers of religion does more to discredit religion in the eyes of ordinary people than would indulgence in many grosser vices. (Heb. 13: 5, 6.)

And follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Righteousness, as used here, is a relation to our fellow men, moral rectitude according to God's law. (Acts 24: 25.) Godliness is a relation to God. (Tit. 2: 11, 12.) Faith, of course, is the basis for both righteousness and godliness. When people have genuine faith, they will manifest the proper attitude toward both God and man. Love is the rule by which faith works: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.) Patience is steadfastness. (Rom. 5: 3-5; James 1: 2-4.) Meekness is gentleness of strength; patience in the reception of injuries, believing that God will vindicate us. (Rom. "2: 19-21.)

Fight the good fight of the faith. "The faith" refers to the gospel, or the system under which and in which Christians serve. There is a constant struggle or warfare between right and wrong, God and the devil, and every Christian is expected to have a part in the conflict. Gospel preachers, such as Timothy, are especially called upon to maintain the truth in a vigorous manner against the fierce opposition of the evil one and his emissaries. It should always be remembered that this fight is "the good fight of the faith," that is, the fight which is authorized by the gospel. (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.)

Lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called. There are two aspects of eternal life set forth in the New Testament—viz., *quality* and *duration*. If we expect to be saved in heaven, we must have a *quality* of life which will endure. (2 Tim. 2: 20, 21.) God has promised eternal life (Tit. 1: 2) which the

faithful will receive in the world to come (Mark 10: 30). We lay hold on life eternal when we struggle to maintain its quality and meet the conditions which will insure its reception. (1 John 5: 10-13; Col. 3: 1-4.) This was the purpose for which Timothy was called.

And didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. The word "confess" means to say the same thing, to agree, and when we confess the name of Christ we say the same thing that God said about him, namely, that he is God's only begotten Son; we agree with God's pronouncement or declaration concerning him. (Matt. 3: 17.) As applied to Timothy, the reference was perhaps to the time he became a Christian, that is, enrolled as a soldier, in keeping with the figure now before us; and it could also have reference to any time in his later life when he was called upon to acknowledge his faith in Christ, and to profess, or declare openly, that he was a servant of the Lord. Bengel says that there were many witnesses who would testify against him if he shall fall away.

I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession. In the preceding verse. Paul reminded Timothy that there were many *human* witnesses to his confession, but in this verse he calls his attention to the fact that there were far greater and much more solemn witnesses to his confession: it was witnessed by both God and Christ. God, he is further reminded, is the one who "preserveth all things alive" (see margin), and he may be sure that he will preserve him alive, if he is true to the confession. The reference, it appears, is more to spiritual life than to physical. (Matt. 10: 28-33.)

The example of Christ is cited as an example of God's care for those who make the good confession. Jesus risked his physical life to make the confession, and thereby put God's protective power to a successful test, and was blessed of God in so doing. (Heb. 5: 7.) The confession which Jesus made was, in effect, his testimony to the whole truth regarding

himself and his mission to the earth, which is summed up, as we know it today, as Christianity; and that is what Timothy's confession involved, that is, he bore testimony to the same truth. And what was true of Timothy in this respect is also true of any other Christian, as may be seen from Rom. 10: 9-10: "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The confession referred to in this passage is no more limited to the confession which one makes when he becomes a Christian, than the faith is so limited; the faithful child of God *continues* to believe and to confess his faith in Christ all through his Christian life. (Heb. 10: 23; 2 Cor. 9: 13; Heb. 13: 15.)

That thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The commandment here evidently refers to the whole body of the teaching of Christ—all that was and is involved in Christianity, so far as the human relation to it is concerned. Timothy is charged with faithfulness to all that God requires of his people. His conduct must be without spot and unrepachable. (James 1: 27; Eph. 5: 27.) The early Christians held before them the coming of Christ as a motive to faithfulness, similar to the way that we look upon death. (1 Thess. 3: 13.)

Which in its own times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. This plainly shows that Paul did not claim to know the time when the second coming of Christ would take place. (Matt. 24: 36; Acts 1: 7.) If the plural of "times" is significant, then the probable meaning is that they involve the successive manifestation and fulfillments which are predicted in Such passages as Matt. 24. The important thing to us is that at the proper time God shall demonstrate his majesty and show who is the only absolute Ruler. The expressions "King of kings, and Lord of lords, illustrate and emphasize Jehovah's Sovereignty. All of this was stated to remind Tim-

othy that he had absolutely nothing to fear in making the good confession.

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen. No one but God, in the absolute sense of the word, hath immortality, and he has nothing but immortality. He was not derived from or at the will of another. He is the self-existent one. He alone therefore has endless existence as his essential nature. The Son and the Holy Spirit are co-eternal with the Father; but their life is derived from and is dependent on his. "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself." (John 5: 26.) If no one can gaze at the sun, which is but a small part of creation, because of its brightness, heat, and power, how much less can a mortal gaze at God's inexpressible glory! No one in the flesh therefore has ever seen or can see God; our duty and privilege is to glorify and honor him. So may it be!

A Charge to the Rich

(1 Tim. 6: 17-19)

Charge them that are rich in this present world. Paul now returns to the subject matter of the charge which he was giving to Timothy. The implication is that there were rich men in the congregation in Ephesus, and that they needed a very important lesson regarding their attitude toward riches. The New Testament does not teach that it is wrong for a Christian to have material wealth, but it does teach that the wealthy must be governed by the principles of the word of God in the use of their riches. Wealth must always be regarded, not as a master or as an end in and of itself, but as a servant—something to be used for the glory of God and the highest good of society. (Gal. 6: 10; Luke 16: 9-13.)

That they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. It is an easy thing for those who have great wealth to feel secure in their riches. But Jesus taught that it is utterly impossible for one to trust in God and riches at the same time. (Matt.

6: 19-24.) It is a well known fact that devotion to any cause will leave an indelible mark upon the character of the devotee. And if the treasure of any person is subject to deterioration, the heart that is in it will be subject to the same fate.

The Bible plainly teaches that God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1: 17), and Jesus made the solemn promise that if his people seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, then they may depend upon God for the material blessings which they need (Matt. 6: 33). It is God's will therefore that his people put their trust in him, and not on the uncertainty of riches. No one can be certain that his riches are going to continue with him. (Prov. 23: 5; Luke 12: 16-21.) God does not give us earthly blessings that we may possess them and be proud over them, but that we may enjoy them, according to his will, and therefore use them as we should.

That then do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate. This is the Lord's plan for the right use of riches. "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith." (Gal. 6: 10; Eph. 4: 28.) The marginal reading of "willing to communicate" is "ready to sympathize"; and when those who have the means to do with follow that rule, they are making to themselves "friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive them into the eternal tabernacles." (Luke 16: 9.)

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed. This passage and the one just quoted from Luke make a good commentary on each other; and they both go back to the Lord's statement in Matt. 6:

19-21. Both Christ and Paul emphasize the fact that Christians must keep first in their minds the things which are of supreme importance; and inasmuch as they are children of eternity, rather than time, it is the height of folly to devote their strength to the gathering of treasures which cannot be converted into the currency of the country to which they are going. One way to lay hold on eternal life is to use aright that which we have in our possessions.

A Final Appeal to Timothy

(1 Tim. 6: 20, 21)

O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee. That which had been committed to Timothy was the instruction contained in this epistle and similar teaching which he had received from Paul. He was to guard this trust carefully, that is, allow no changes to be made in it, and see to it that it was properly used and passed on to others. (1 Tim. 1: 3; 2 Tim. 2: 2.)

Turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith. This is another reference to the false teachers in the church in Ephesus, mentioned in chapter 1. See also 6: 3-5. Anything contrary to the gospel is indeed knowledge falsely so called. The teachers who had professed this spurious knowledge had "missed the mark." (See marginal reading; 1 Tim. 1: 6; 2 Tim. 2: 18.) The benediction is simply, *Grace be with you.* The original word for "you" is plural, but that, according to Greek scholars, is not sufficient to prove that the epistle as a whole was intended for the entire church. Moulton says that "the study of papyri letters will show that the singular and the plural alternated in the same document with apparently no distinction of meaning."

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

How long did Paul labor with the church in Ephesus?
What was the trust which had been committed to Timothy?

Give some of the leading facts regarding the church in Ephesus.

The Golden Text

What do the words of this text express?
In what way do these words show the importance of sound doctrine?
Analyze the golden text and discuss each part separately.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Principles for Timothy's Guidance

In what sense is the expression "man of God" used here? In 2 Tim. 3: 17?

What things was Timothy exhorted to flee? What does Paul say about the love of money?

How should preachers, especially, regard this admonition? Discuss fully.

What was Timothy told to follow? Discuss each item separately. "good fight of the faith"? Show the significance of "the" before faith.

What two aspects of eternal life are set forth in the New Testament? and what does each signify?

How may one lay hold on eternal life?

What does the word "confess" mean? and when did Timothy make his confession?

What is the significance of "I charge thee in the sight of God," etc.?

What relation does this have to the charge which Timothy received?

How is the New Testament teaching regarding the confession related to Christians generally? Discuss fully.

What commandment was Timothy told to keep? and how?

What was meant by "until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

What will be revealed when Christ comes?

What is meant by saying that God only hath immortality?

A Charge to the Rich

What does this charge imply?

Is it wrong for Christians to be rich in material wealth? Give reasons for your answer.

Where are the rich told to put their trust? and why?

What is meant by the "uncertainty of riches"?

What is the Lord's plan for the right use of riches?

How can Christians lay up for themselves a good foundation?

A Final Appeal to Timothy

What was Timothy told to guard? and what did that mean?

From what was he to turn away?

How did some "miss the mark"? and what does that mean?

Lesson VII—May 18, 1958

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY

Lesson Text

2 Tim. 1: 1-12

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Je'-sus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Je'-sus,

2 To Tim'-o-thy. my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Je'-sus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day

4 Longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lo'-is, and thy mother Eu-ni'-ce; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.

6 For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.

7 For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love

and discipline.

8 Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God:

9 Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not -according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Je'-sus before times eternal.

10 But hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Je'-sus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

11 Whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher.

12 For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed: for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"As a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel."* (Phil. 2: 22b.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—2 Tim. 1: 13-18.

Daily Bible Readings

May 12. M.....	Timothy's Parents (Acts 16: 1-8)
May 13. T.....	Timothy with Paul (Acts 20: 1-4)
May 14. W.....	Timothy Sent to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3: 1-6)
May 15.	T. Timothy with Paul in Rome (Phil. 2: 19-24)
May 16. F.....	Timothy Left in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1: 1-3)
May 17. S.....	Joined with Paul (Phil. 1: 1; Col. 1: 1, 2)
May 18. S.....	Timothy's Zeal (1 Tim. 6: 11, 12)

TIME.—A.D. 68.

PLACE.—Rome and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

This is Paul's last letter, which has come down to us, as indeed it is probably the last letter he wrote before going to be with Jesus. Paul's second letter to Timothy is more personal than the first. The apostle felt that his race had been run, the fight was over, but, thank God, he had kept the faith. (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.) Timothy, his beloved son in the gospel, was probably still in far away Ephesus, but Paul felt that he must see him; and it is probable that the apostle sent Tychicus to relieve Timothy, so that the latter could feel freer to make the long trip to Rome. (2 Tim. 4: 12.)

By Jn-case Timothy should not reach him before Paul was forced to leave his mortal body, this letter was sent to Ephesus. It contains the final advice of a father to his son in the gospel, a son perhaps naturally sensitive and timid, who had to be left behind to face the hardships involved in opposing the heresies which threatened to destroy the very essence of Christianity. In commenting on this letter, Conybeare and

Howson observe that no summary of its contents can give any notion of the pathetic tenderness and deep solemnity of this epistle."

We learn from Tit. 3: 12 that Paul had planned to spend the winter in Nicopolis, apparently the Nicopolis in Epirus on the western seacoast of ancient Greece. It is not definitely known whether or not he ever reached that city, but he probably did. Some students of the life of Paul think that he may have been arrested in Troas in the house of Carpus, where, in the hurry of departure, he left his cloak, books, and parchments mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:

13. Many students, however, are of the opinion that Paul did reach Nicopolis and probably was arrested there during mid-winter. No one knows what the specific charges against him were. He would almost certainly "be regarded as an offender against the law which prohibited the propagation of a new and illicit religion (*religio nova et illicita*) among the citizens of Rome."

The Golden Text

"As a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel"

It is generally conceded that Timothy was converted by Paul during the latter's first great missionary journey, probably in Lystra which seems to have been his home. (Acts 16: 1, 2; 20: 4.) This young disciple of Christ was probably a witness of the terrible sufferings which Paul endured while in Lystra (Acts 14: 19, 20), and he evidently knew about the apostle's other sufferings which came upon him while he was in that section of the country. (2 Tim. 3: 10, 11; Acts 14: 21, 22.) All

of this must have made a profound impression upon Timothy's tender heart.

It is doubtful if any of Paul's companions and fellow-workers had a greater place in his affection and esteem than Timothy. This young evangelist shared the great apostle's outward labors and intimate thoughts. It appears that Timothy was associated with his spiritual father during a longer period than any of Paul's other companions.

Timothy was with Paul when the latter could not or would not have

the companionship of others. He was charged with some of the most important tasks which could be delegated to other men by the apostle, and when the Lord's great ambassador was in his last and lonely im-

prisonment, it was Timothy whom he summoned to console him and receive his last injunctions. Truly, "as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel."

The Text Explained

The Salutation

(2 Tim. 1: 1, 2)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he said, "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. 1:

15, 16.) It was therefore according to the sovereign will of God that Paul became an apostle, and not in any sense according to the will of men. (Acts 22: 14, 15; 26: 16-18; Gal. 1: 11, 12.)

According to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus. This probably means that Paul regarded his apostleship as a part of the divine plan for the accomplishment of that promise, or for the purpose of making it real in the lives of those who would accept the gospel. In keeping with the passages cited above, Paul understood that it was his obligation to proclaim "the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus," so that people might know about it and make it their own. The life, of course, was eternal life. (1 John 5: 10-13; 3: 14.)

To Timothy, my beloved child: grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. In the first letter, Paul calls Timothy "my true child in faith," otherwise the salutation is the same. (Tit. 1:

4.) Paul had a very tender affection for Timothy whom he had led to Christ and had trained in the ministry of the gospel, and who had proved himself worthy of his confidence and love.

Thanksgiving for Timothy's Past

(2 Tim. 1: 3-5)

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience.

Paul implies here that his God-fearing life was the result of generations of devout people. He had been carefully trained to walk in the fear of

God and to do his best to please him. It was therefore no idle word for him to say, "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23: 1); and, "Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men always." (Acts 24: 16.) This was because he always, did that which he believed to be right. He was terribly wrong at times, but he was always willing to change his course completely when he saw his error.

How unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee. It will have to be admitted that the sentence structure in this translation is not very clear. Moffatt translates the passage in these words, "I render thanks to God, . . . as I mention you constantly in my prayers. When I recall the tears you shed when we parted, I long by night and day to see you again; that would fill me with joy, for I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, as it dwells (I am certain) in yourself."

Weymouth renders the passage as follows: "I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my fathers did, that night and day I unceasingly remember you in my prayers, and ever mindful of your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. For I recall the sincere faith which is in you—a faith which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and, I am convinced, dwells in you also."

A comparison of various translations will often enable one to have a clearer understanding of that which the inspired writer meant to express. It seems that Paul, remembering the tears of his son in the gospel, constantly remembered him in prayer, and was thankful to God for him and the kind of life he was living. The tears of Timothy had touched Paul and had caused him to have a most tender feeling for him. He, of course,

longed to see him, for he knew that such an experience would fill him with joy. (Acts 20: 36-38.)

Perhaps that which counted most with Paul was the faith of Timothy, the faith which resulted in Timothy's being the kind of man that he was. But that faith was not just a "happen so," nor yet a mushroom growth; it came as the result of faithful teaching on the part of his mother and grandmother. "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3: 14, 15.) The things which Timothy had learned, as indicated here, were the things which had been taught him by his mother, grandmother, and Paul, in particular.

An Exhortation to Follow Paul's

Example
(2 Tim. 1: 6-12)

For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands. Meyer thinks that this verse contains the chief thought of the whole chapter. Inasmuch as Paul was convinced that Timothy did have genuine faith, he now exhorts him to "fan into a flame" the gift of God which he possessed. It should be observed that God bestows the gift, but human effort is required to keep it alive. (1 Thess. 5: 19.)

We are not told specifically what the gift was, but a comparison of this verse with 1 Tim. 4: 14 indicates that it had something to do with Timothy's being set apart to the work of an evangelist. The voice of prophecy had led the way to Timothy, that is, had pointed him out as a person suitable for the work of an evangelist. (1 Tim. 18; 4: 14.) Paul and the elders laid their hands upon him. If there was a miraculous gift or power bestowed upon Timothy, it was, of course, limited to the age of miracles. (1 Cor. 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-13.)

For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline (sobering, margin). Some Bible students are of the opinion that Timothy's faith had waned

somewhat, due, perhaps to his separation from Paul and the persecutions which had been waged against the apostle, but that does not necessarily follow. Others think that Timothy was by nature timid, and that he needed this encouragement. This may have been true. At any rate, any person in the position of Timothy, that is, with such great responsibility resting upon him, would need this kind of encouragement.

The word "fearfulness" has the same meaning as that of *cowardice*. (Luke 12: 4, 5; Rev. 21: 8.) Timothy must not, under any circumstance, shirk to declare the whole counsel of God. (2 Tim. 4: 1-5.) The "power" referred to here, according to Vincent, does not mean power to work miracles, but to the ability to overcome all obstacles and to face all dangers. (1 Cor. 10: 13.) Verse 8 seems to confirm Vincent's idea. "Love" is that quality which never allows one to lose sight of the goal toward which he is working, namely, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. "Discipline" as used here, means self-control, "or, as practically applied, a man of prudence and discretion. Thus, if Timothy will not be afraid, but will remember that God supplies the power to overcome, the love to motivate, and the incentive to a successful ministry, he will be the kind of evangelist which will glorify God and be a blessing to his fellow men.

Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God. The word "therefore" connects this statement with the preceding one, and shows Timothy what is expected of him as a result of his having received from God the spirit of power, love, and discipline. Paul was a prisoner at this time and the gospel of Christ was held in disrepute by many, the very gospel for which Paul was a prisoner. Some brethren were not able to overcome this great obstacle and had, accordingly, deserted Paul, and he was very anxious that this would not happen to Timothy. He calls upon him to suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power which God had given to him for that purpose. To "suffer hardship with the gospel" was to suffer persecution for its sake.

Who saved us, and called us with

a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal. This is a further motive for Timothy to continue to be faithful. God has done so much for us (all Christians) and the very least we can do is to be faithful to his will for us. He saved us from sin and has called us to pure and holy life apart from the world. This great plan of salvation and holy living did not depend on any efforts on our part, but it was perfected according to God's own purpose and grace, and was made possible in Christ for us before the world began, or, as the margin reads, long years ago.

But hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus. There is a contrast between the *preparation* to bring us these great blessings, mentioned in the preceding verse, and the *actual accomplishment* of our salvation as a result of the coming of Christ. "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world." (Tit. 2: 11, 12.)

Who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Christ *abolished* death for his people in the sense of taking the sting out of it for them, or making it non-effective so far as they are concerned. (1 Cor. 15: 54-58; Heb. 2: 14, 15.) The complete and final abolition of death will take place when Christ comes at the end of the world. (Rev. 20: 14.) In contrast with the abolition of death, Christ brought to light, that is, made clear to all (Thayer), the doctrine of life and immortality by means of the gospel. It would be extremely difficult for anyone to become faithless as long as he cherishes that which Paul set forth as motives of faithfulness in verses 3-10.

Whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher. Compare 1 Tim. 2: 27 and see comment made there in Lesson II of this quarter.

For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed. Paul's suffering at the time he wrote this letter was the result of his faithfulness to the trust which had been com-

mitted to him when he was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher. He had done that which the Lord expected him to do. (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.) Paul had asked Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of him as his prisoner and now he gives him his own example to imitate. If the father is not ashamed, neither should the son be.

For I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day. See comments on the Golden text in the preceding lesson. Faith in religion is something like an experiment in science. It is not the needless and thoughtless swallowing of dogma, but the reverent testing of a profession. It is not the blinding of the judgment, but rather the application of the judgment to the superlative work of proving the claims of the Lord. "Prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts." (Mal. 3: 10.)

Paul had been, all during his life as a Christian, and he still was making the experiment. He had carefully considered the claims of Christ, believed his word, ventured to do his will, and had staked his all upon the test, "whom I have believed." with the result, "I know him."

The ultimate ground of Christian certainty, therefore, lies in the positive facts of Christian experience. Everyone knows the value and authority of experience in other fields, and why not come to realize its importance in the Christian life? There is no certainty so absolute as that which comes through experience. Compare the laboratory work of a scientist. (Heb. 6: 4-6.)

Paul had *committed* something unto, or had *deposited* something with God; for that is the meaning of the word. What was it? *Everything — himself.* (Gal. 2: 20.) When that was done, he then trusted God for everything. (Phil. 4: 19; Heb. 13: 5, 6.) The emphasis is not on *what* was committed, but on the *safety* of the deposit. "I am persuaded that he is able to guard" my deposit. This is what the Bible means by *trust* in the Lord, and it is certain that nothing but a complete committal will bring peace and contentment, in this world of sin and sorrow, and lead one to determine, at all cost, to live so as to please God.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Give a few of the principal facts regarding Second Timothy.
Where were Paul and Timothy at the time of writing? Consult a map.
Why was the letter written?
What place did Paul probably visit last before going to prison?
What is known of the charge registered against him?

The Golden Text

When and where was Timothy probably converted?
How did Paul regard him as a fellow worker?
What made Timothy such a dependable man?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Salutation

How had Paul become an apostle? Explain fully.
What did he mean by the expression "according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus"?
What life did he have reference to? Give reasons for your answer.
How does this salutation compare with the one in First Timothy?

Thanksgiving for Timothy's Past

For what did Paul thank God?
What did he mean by the reference to his forefathers?
What does it mean for one to have a pure conscience?
Does a clear conscience always mean that

one is right in his relation to God? Give reasons for your answer.
What, then, is the value of a good conscience?

What benefit may one derive from a comparison of different translations?
What did Paul remember regarding Timothy? and why did he want to see him?
What did Paul say regarding Timothy's faith?
How did he come to have such faith?
What can you say regarding the value of training children in the things of God?

An Exhortation to Follow Paul's Example

Why did Paul exhort Timothy to stir up the gift which he had from God?
What was the gift? and when and how did he receive it?
What is meant by a spirit of fearfulness? Discuss fully.
Why would Timothy need such an exhortation?
What characterizes the spirit which Christians have from God?
What is meant by "power and love and discipline"?
Of what was Timothy not to be ashamed? and why?
What does it mean to suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God?
What motive to continue faithful was given? and how was it perfected before times eternal?
How was it manifested by the appearing of Christ?
How did Christ abolish death and bring life and immortality to light?
What was Paul appointed to do?
Why did he suffer? and why wasn't he ashamed?
Why did Paul have such great confidence in Christ?

Lesson VIII—May 25, 1958

EXHORTATIONS TO FAITHFULNESS

Lesson Text

2 Tim. 2: 1-7, 22-26

1 Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Je'-sus.

2 And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Je'-sus.

4 No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier.

5 And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboreth must be the first to partake of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say; for the

Lord shall give thee understanding in all things.

22 But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes.

24 And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing,

25 In meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth,

26 And they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will.

Golden Text.—*"The Lord knoweth them that are his."* (2 Tim. 2: 19a.)
 Devotional Reading.—2 Tim. 2: 8-21.

Daily Bible Readings

May 19.	M.....	A Faithful and Wise Servant (Matt. 24: 45-47)
May 20.	T.....	Example of Faithfulness (Matt. 25: 14-23)
May 21.	W.....	David's Faithfulness (2 Sam. 22: 22-25)
May 22.	T.....	Abijah's Faithfulness (2 Chron. 13: 4-20)
May 23.	F.....	Faithful in Little and Much (Luke 16: 10-12)
May 24.	S.....	A Crown for the Faithful (Rev. 2: 1-10)
May 25.	S.....	Faithfulness Required (1 Cor. 4: 1-6)

TIME.—A.D. 68.

Place.—Rome and Ephesus.

Persons.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

One of the greatest questions which will confront people at the judgment is that of faithfulness. Faithfulness is much more significant than accomplishment; that is the obvious lesson of the Lord's parable of the talents. The reason Jesus spoke that parable was to teach the need for fidelity to duty in all the relationships of the children of God. The idea on which the parable is based is that man is the depository of a great trust, and only by faithfulness to that trust can he please God.

There is in man a divine capacity for truth, duty, and righteousness; and in order to guide and strengthen that capacity in its development, God has given him a code of instruction, found in the New Testament; and it is by obeying that code, which is another name for faithfulness, that man can have the power to administer his trust so as to please the Lord. Every form of human gift and opportunity is a part of the wealth which God

has invested in man; and his sole business in this life is to be a faithful steward of the trust reposed in him.

If there is any one thing taught in the Bible, it is that God will have a final reckoning with his people. "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5: 10.) But in making this reckoning, there is only one test, that of faithfulness. We are not simply asked to perform certain deeds or to give certain amounts, but rather to do our best. It is our faithfulness, rather than our ability which will count in the last great day. The Lord in the parable of the talents used exactly the same words in commending the men with the five and two talents, respectively. (Matt. 25: 20-23.)

The Golden Text

"*The Lord knoweth them that are his.*" This statement should be considered in the light of its general context. Throughout the entire book of Second Timothy, the thought of Paul oscillates between deserters of the Lord's cause, and those who are faithful under all circumstances. In this chapter he exhorted Timothy to "suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus," and then he went on to illustrate what it means to consecrate one's self to Christ.

And then in the immediate context of the golden text, Paul continues, "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them in the sight of

the Lord, that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear." This is followed by an exhortation regarding Timothy's own conduct, both positively and negatively, the latter of which is forcefully illustrated. The verse in which the golden text is found opens with a strong adversative, indicating a vital contrast.

Thus, in contrast with the unsettling action of the heretics, we have the firm foundation of God which, apparently, in this place means God's immoveable faithfulness on which his people may depend. This foundation,

accordingly, has two seals or inscriptions, or rather two parts of one seal, one denoting the *security* of his people; the other, their *purity*. The first part is our golden text: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." (Nah. 1: 7; Num. 16: 5.) This shows that the church exists in thee Divine

Knowledge, and not simply in the intellect of man. (Rom. 9: 6; 11: 26; 1 John 2: 19.) The second part on the foundation is, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." This guarantees the purity of the church, which is indispensable to its security.

The Text Explained

The Way to Faithfulness

(2 Tim. 2: 1-3)

Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Paul devoted the greater part of chapter 1 to exhorting Timothy to be true to the trust which had been committed to him, but he interrupted his exhortations, and in the last paragraph of the chapter he cited some examples of unfaithfulness and one of true devotion. Paul now resumes his exhortations to Timothy. Although the apostle no doubt meant for Timothy to profit by the examples which were given, that does not appear to have been the primary appeal, but instead marks the intensity of Paul's anxiety for the future conduct of Timothy in his work in the church.

The particular thing which Timothy is here exhorted to do is to "be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The faithful Christian lives in the grace which has been provided by Christ and which is in Christ; and he can become strong only by his abiding on continuing in that grace. The passive construction does not imply that we are passive in the reception of influence from without; the act of reception involves our cooperation with God. The power is available, but we must keep in touch with it; and if we do we shall be strengthened. If we abide in Christ then he will abide in and strengthen us. (Rom. 4: 20; Eph. 6: 10; Phil. 4: 13.)

And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. The things which Timothy had received from Paul were the fundamental truths of the gospel, and they had been received in the presence of many witnesses who would be ready to confirm that which had been said. These witnesses therefore were not mere spectators, but men who were ready and willing to

testify as to the truthfulness of the message.

Timothy is urged to commit, that is, deposit in trust, that which he had learned from Paul, to faithful men, so that the teaching of the truth may continue on down through the ages. It is assumed that this practice would be continued as long as there were faithful men to make the deposit and to receive the trust. This would insure the continuity of the ministry of the word.

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. This is a touching statement, written by a father to his son in the faith whom he was about to leave in a cruel and sinful world. As life moves forward there comes to most of us a clearer view of its meaning, and of its intense importance. We are led to realize more and more that we are surrounded by many strange and hidden alien forces, and are harassed by numberless unseen foes. These must be met and it will require hardship and suffering on the part of the faithful child of God. Paul uses the metaphor of a soldier on duty, and bids Timothy act the part of a good soldier, as he suffered with his father in the gospel.

Divinely Illustrated

(2 Tim. 2: 4-7)

No soldier on service entangleth in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier. One of the noticeable features of the New Testament records of the teaching of Jesus and the apostles is the frequent use they make of illustrations. A good illustration or figure of speech will often say for us that which we have tried to say and failed. Such a form of words can gather around it all the vague thoughts and feelings which we have been unable to express. In this section of our lesson alone, Paul uses three illustrations—the soldier, the

contestant in games, and the husbandman.

While Paul's reference in these things is primarily to Timothy as a gospel preacher, the principle itself is also applicable to any child of God. No one who is serving as a soldier, if he expects to please his commander, will become so involved in the other interests of life as to make it impossible for him to discharge his duty as a soldier. A man who is on active duty as a soldier must be in position to go anywhere and do anything which his commander requires. This injunction emphasizes about the same idea which Jesus did when he taught that his disciples should seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6: 33.)

The key word in the text now before us is "entangleth," found only in this passage and in 2 Pet. 2: 20. It carries with it the idea of inweaving, or becoming involved. Paul's argument here does not prohibit one's engaging in secular callings as a matter of support. He himself made tents; but the idea is that one must not become so involved as to make it impossible for him to be faithful to Christ. Some religious teachers have tried to make Paul's meaning here justify the celibacy of preachers, but there is no foundation in fact for that type of thinking.

And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully. The three illustrations which Paul uses here were also used by him in his first letter to the Corinthians. See chapter

9. The well-trained athlete knows that he must conform to the rules of the game, if he is to be declared the winner. Later on in this letter to Timothy, Paul will say, "I have finished the course." The article "the" is in the original, thus implying that the course not only indicates strenuous running, but running over a well-defined and carefully marked-out track. Any Christian, if he is to be faithful, must do that which the Lord ordains for him to do; he must follow the rules. (Matt. 7: 21-23.) The word "lawfully" should be carefully emphasized; "let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12: 1b.)

The husbandman that laboreth must be the first to partake of the

fruits. The word "laboreth" seems to be the key word here. It is as if Paul said, "It is the *working* farmer, not the one who does not work, who has the first right of enjoying the fruits of his labors." This, of course, was to encourage Timothy to continue in, to persevere in, his work as a minister of the gospel. It is the enduring, patient, self-sacrificing toil which is rewarded in the common affairs of life; and that same principle must be recognized in the spiritual realm. And so, whether as a soldier, an athlete, or a farmer, it is patient endurance which brings the reward. The soldier who avoids foreign entanglements, the athlete who follows the rules of the game, and the farmer who labors, will receive the reward. This principle necessarily excludes those who fail in these respects.

Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things. The word "consider" means to. think upon, take heed to, ponder. If Timothy will make the application to himself the lessons of the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer, he will understand what Paul means by the illustrations. Both Jesus and James taught the same truth. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." (John 7: 17a.) "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1: 5; see also verses 6-8.)

The Spirit of God's True Workman

(2 Tim. 2: 22-26)

But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. In view of the high moral character of Timothy which is portrayed in other parts of the New Testament, it is doubtful if Paul had in mind sensual lusts which are common among so many younger people. The probable reference was to pride, ambition, impetuosity, self-confidence, desire for controversy, new ideas, and similar passions which usually characterize younger men, in contrast with older. The following verses seem to confirm this idea.

Thus, instead of yielding to youthful lusts, follow after righteousness, that is, the proper attitude toward

his fellow men, *faith*, involving both conviction and confidence regarding God and his word, *love*, the rule by which faith works (Gal. 5:6), *peace*, a course of life promoting harmony (Rom. 12: 18; Heb. 12: 14). Some Bible students are of the opinion that there should be no comma after *peace*, making the passage read, "peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." The practical meaning of this is, with all faithful Christians. At any rate, this was the kind of life which Timothy was exhorted to follow after.

But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender *strifes*. Foolish and ignorant questionings are those which come from an untrained mind. They arise as a result of the lack of thinking on the part of those with whom they originate; a failure to understand the nature of the subject under consideration. When people misunderstand a proposition, it is easy for them to misrepresent it. Paul's language in

1 Tim. 6: 3-5 is a good commentary on this passage:

"If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting [sick, margin] about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men, corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain."

And the Lord's servant must not *strive*. This shows why the foolish and ignorant questionings referred to above must be refused. The word "strive," as used here, means to engage in contentious disputes, or as Thayer has it, to engage in a war of words, to quarrel, to wrangle. This is a positive prohibition, and the primary reference is to preachers. Someone has said that false teaching is most effectively combated indirectly; not by controversy, that is, the type which is characterized by wranglings, but by quiet, positive foundation work on which the truth of the gospel can be displayed.

But be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing. (Tit. 3: 1-4; 1 Thess. 2: 7; 1 Tim. 3: 3.) These

passages, along with the text now before us show the kind of a man the gospel preacher should be. The word "gentle" means amiable, friendly, that is, the gospel preacher should manifest a friendly disposition toward those whom he wants to lead to the Lord. "Apt to teach" means capable of teaching. This is in contrast with the foolish and ignorant questionings of verse 23. The term "forbearing" means to have patience with the ills and wrongs of others.

In meekness correcting them that oppose themselves. Those who opposed themselves were the ones who had embraced error and were opposing the truth; they were fighting against their own best interest. Paul told Timothy to manifest gentleness of strength, that is, be meek and gentle toward them, while endeavoring to teach them the truth. The marginal reading for "correcting" is "instructing."

If peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth. Phillips renders this passage in these words: "He [that is, the preacher] must always bear in mind the possibility that God will give them a different outlook, and that, they may come to know the truth." Finite man does not always know in what ways the providence of God may work in behalf of those who have fallen into error; and if the preacher will deal kindly with them and teach the truth, he is doing his part; and he should be willing to leave the rest with the Lord. The word "repentance" simply means a change of mind, and the meaning is that those in error may change their minds regarding the positions they held, and may come to understand the truth.

And they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will. The marginal reading of "recover" is *return to soberness*. It is the same idea which Jesus expressed when he said that the prodigal son "came to himself" that is, he recovered his senses. In the expression "having been taken captive," the marginal reading is "taken alive," as fish are caught, that is, they are taken alive. (Luke 5: 10.) Bible students

are not agreed regarding whose will is referred to in the last part of the passage. Goodspeed translates the verse, "And they may yet return to their senses and escape from the toils of the devil, who has caught them to make them do his will." Vincent's

rendering is, "And that they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil (having been held captive by him) to do God's will." Thayer takes notice of this difference of opinion. In either case, the lesson is obvious.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What is your idea of the value of this lesson for people today? Give reasons for your answer.
In what way does the parable of the talents illustrate this lesson?
What does the New Testament teach regarding a final reckoning?
How do faithfulness and ability stand related to each individual?

The Golden Text

What is the best way to understand this golden text? Why?
What does it mean to suffer hardship, as a good soldier?
What is meant by the firm foundation of God?
In what way is this foundation sealed or inscribed?
What two truths does the seal emphasize?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Way to Faithfulness

What is the significance of the word "therefore" in verse 1?
What is meant by being strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus?
Are we to be passive or active in this matter? Why?
What had Timothy heard from Paul? and what was he to do about it?
What is meant by committing it to faithful men?

What makes Paul's exhortation to Timothy to suffer hardship impressive?

Divinely Illustrated

What is the value of illustrations in teaching?
What must be the attitude of every good soldier?
What is meant by "entangleth"?
What is a successful athlete required to do? Why?
What is the lesson regarding the husbandman?
Why did Paul tell Timothy to *consider* what he said?
In what way would the Lord give him understanding in all things?
Does that same principle apply to us?
Give reasons for your answer.

The Spirit of God's True Workman

What youthful lusts did Paul likely refer to?
What was Timothy told to follow after? Discuss each point fully.
What was to be his attitude toward foolish and ignorant questionings? Why?
What kind of questionings were these?
In what sense must the Lord's servant not strive?
What must be his attitude to all? and why?
What is meant by "in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves"?
What possibility is held out for those in error?
How could they recover themselves from the snare of the devil?
How may one do the will of the devil?
How may he do the will of God?

Lesson IX—June 1, 1958

PAUL WARNS OF EVIL MEN

Lesson Text

2 Tim. 3: 1-9

1 But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good,

4 Traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God;

5 Holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away.

6 For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 And even as Jan'-nes and Jam'-bres withstood Mo'-ses, so do these also withstand the truth; men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be evident unto all men, as theirs also came to be.

Golden Text.—*"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."* (2 Tim. 2: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Tim. 3: 10-17.

Daily Bible Readings

May 26. M.	Description of Wicked Men (2 Pet. 2: 10-19)
May 27. T.	Wickedness Originates with the Devil (1 John 3: 8-15)
May 28. W.	Heathen Wickedness (Rom. 1: 20-32)
May 29. T.	Woe on the Wicked (Isa. 30: 1-11)
May 30.	F. Wickedness Separates from God (Isa. 59: 2-8)
May 31. S.	Wickedness Brings Ruin (Job 18: 5-21)
June 1. S.	Examples for Us (1 Cor. 10: 5-11)

TIME.—A.D. 68.

Place.—Rome and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

This is one of the dark pictures of the New Testament; it is filled with forebodings and makes us think of the first chapter of Romans. Paul was guided by the Holy Spirit when he wrote this letter, and, of course, he presented a true picture of that which the future would hold. It will be recalled that Paul warned of a coming apostasy in chapter 4 of his first letter to Timothy. It has always been the Lord's plan to present the dark side of the picture, as well as the bright. This was not because he wanted evil to come, but because he knew that sinful men would conduct themselves in that way.

The only way to prevent an evil condition, or to lessen its force if it cannot be entirely prevented, is to teach the word of God and urge people to accept it. Too many people fail to see this, or are indifferent to-

ward it, and therefore do nothing about it until the damage has been done. The conflict between right and wrong has been in progress since the time of the garden of Eden, and the only possible way to improve conditions is to follow the Lord instead of the evil one.

One has only to look about him in order to see that many, many churches have been sadly crippled, if not entirely destroyed simply because the people were not taught the word of God. When people are familiar with that which the Bible teaches, and have learned to respect the authority of the Lord, it is not so easy for them to be led astray. But when this great work is neglected, it is not difficult for thoughtful people to see that grievous times are impending.

The Golden Text

"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth The word "diligence" means to exert one's self, to endeavor, to make an effort. Exhortations involving the original of this word are found frequently in the New Testament. It is used in the sense of "endeavor" in 1 Thess. 2: 17: 'But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short season, in presence not in heart, endeavored the more exceedingly to see your face with great desire.' This gives some idea of the zeal involved in such efforts. (Eph. 4: 3; 2 Pet. 1: 10, 15; 3: 14; Gal. 2: 10.)

The diligence which Paul urged Timothy to manifest was intended to accomplish a definite purpose, namely, "to present thyself approved of God." It does not make any difference how much is accomplished by one's diligent efforts, it will amount to nothing if it does not please God. Christ gives a classic example of this truth in Matt. 7: 21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And

then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (2 Cor. 5: 9.)

The reason why such a workman does not need to be ashamed is because he has nothing to be ashamed of. He has done that which pleases God. "Oh that my ways were established To observe thy statutes! Then shall I not be put to shame,

When I have respect unto all thy commandments." (Psalm 119: 5, 6.) One handles aright the word of truth when he deals with it as God intends that he should. Thayer says that it means to teach the truth correctly and directly. Vincent suggests that the truth should be treated honestly and fully, in a straightforward manner.

The Text Explained

A Description of the Times

(2 Tim. 3: 1-5)

But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. The term "but" introduces a contrast between the exhortation given to Timothy in the preceding verses and that which was to be expected in the future. Paul wanted Timothy whom he was about to leave in this wicked world, to know what he and other teachers of God's word would have to face. This, of course, includes teachers on down through the ages.

"The last days" is an expression which is co-extensive with the Christian dispensation. After the gospel has been presented in its clearest light by the inspired writers and teachers, the shadows deepen as the future unfolds itself and history is recorded. The last recorded words of Paul, Peter, John, and Jude form an impressive prelude to the Book of Revelation. This last book is an inspired account of that which would befall the church between the time when John wrote and the coming of Christ at the end of the world. The fortunes of the church, its struggles and final triumph, are graphically set forth in prophecy; but it should be observed that much of that which was prophecy then is *history* now. Prophecy which has to do with the future may be described as history written in advance.

Paul predicted an apostasy in 1 Tim. 4: 1-3. Peter, John, and Jude also told of wickedness which would be encountered in the future. "Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the begin-

ning of the creation." (2 Pet. 3: 3, 4; Jude 17, 18; 1 John 2: 18, 19.) We may not know what specific period Paul meant when he said that grievous times would come, but inasmuch as the original word for "times" usually designated a definite season, it is reasonable to suppose that he had something specific in mind. Of course, it could mean that such seasons would occur more than once, since the last days cover the entire dispensation.

For men shall be lovers of self. Selfishness is the basis for practically every sin which is committed by men. Someone has said that "sin is anything in *my* life that keeps me from God and other people. Begin at either end of sin, and you will always find 'I' in the middle." Jesus made the renunciation of self the first condition of discipleship: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 14: 24.)

Lovers of money. Paul said in his first letter to Timothy that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." (1 Tim. 6: 10a.) There is hardly anything that some men will not do for money. *Boastful.* A boaster is an empty pretender, claiming that which he does not have. *Haughty.* One who over-estimates his means or merits, and looks down with contempt on others. When one thinks too highly of himself, he tends to become egotistical and arrogant, and is rash in his opinions. *Railers.* One who uses slanderous, reproachful, and abusive speech. (2 Pet. 2: 11.) *Disobedient to parents.* Bengel remarks that "the character of the times is to be gathered especially from the manners of the young." Such passages as Deut. 21: 18-21 and Eph. 6: 1-3 give us some idea of how

God feels about the subject of filial obedience. **Unthankful.** This trait of character is a natural outgrowth, of disobedience to parents. Ingratitude has always been regarded as one of the worst of crimes. (Luke 6: 35.) **Unholy.** An unholy person is impious and wicked.

Without natural affection. Without the love which naturally exists between parents and their young. As Adam Clarke remarks, this characteristic is common to every class of animals; and the implication is that the people who do not possess it are worse than the brute creation. **Implacable.** An implacable person is one who cannot be persuaded to enter into an agreement, that is, he will not be bound by any such promise. **Slanderers.** False accusers, those who endeavor to destroy the character of others. The original for this term is the same from which we have the word "devil." **Without self-control.** One who is loose in morals and conduct. **Fierce.** "Savage, brutal, untamed. The traits "without self-control" and "fierce" form a despicable pair: unable to control themselves and inhuman in their conduct toward others. **No lovers of good.** Opposed to goodness and good men. This, of course, is the exact opposite of that which the Lord requires in his people. (Tit. 1: 8; Phil. 4: 8, 9.)

Traitors. That is, one who betrays another. (Luke 6: 16; Acts 7: 52.) **Headstrong.** Reckless, thoughtless, rash. The word "rash" in Acts 19: 36 is from the same original word. People who manifest this trait are determined to have their own way; and, under the influence of passion, they seek to go toward that end without thinking it through or considering the consequences. **Puffed up.** The original of this term is from a word which means *smoke*; and, as Bengel remarks, it is as if one should be filled with smoke, that is, suffocated, and as a result, no longer sane or at himself. A man who is puffed up is conceited or blinded with pride, and so becomes foolish or stupid. (1 Tim. 3: 6; 6: 4.) **Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.** "Lovers of pleasure" is said to have been an epithet of the Epicureans, and it has been well remarked that pleasure, that is, sensual pleasure, de-

stroys the love and sense of God. (1 Tim. 5: 6.) This sordid catalogue of wickedness begins with lovers of self, and ends with the exclusion of God. (Rom. 1: 18-32.)

Holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: The idea set forth here has an exact parallel in Tit. 1: 16: "They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." **Such** people are only professing Christians; there is nothing genuine about them. Their view of practical Christianity was purely theoretical and academic; their attitude toward it was a positive disbelief in its regenerating force. The word "deny" in this passage is used in the sense of repudiate. (Tit. 2: 12; 1 Tim. 5: 8; Rev. 2: 13.) They carried their denial into actual practice.

From these also turn away. Timothy is exhorted to shun or avoid people who manifest the traits of character which have just been described. The application to Timothy implies that he would live to see the grievous times which Paul described. The word "also" probably refers back to 2 Tim. 2: 22, 23.

The Method of the False Teachers
(2 Tim. 3: 6, 7)

For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts. The false teachers did not go about their work openly, but wormed their way into houses by stealth. These insidious methods are also referred to in other parts of the New Testament. "For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 4; 2 Pet. 2: 1; Gal. 2: 4; Tit. 1: 11.) This, unfortunately, is still the method employed by false teachers.

Paul says that they "take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts." The original for "silly women" literally means *little women*. The derogatory connotation is expressed by the contemptuous diminutive. Robertson notes that Ramsey suggests "society

ladies," and remarks that it is amazing how gullible some women are with religious charlatans who pose as exponents of "new thought." The plan here followed was originated by Satan, who began his work of temptation with Eve rather than with Adam. (1 Tim. 2: 14.) This does not imply that all women are silly or gullible, but when such are found they are ideal for the false teachers.

Such women are easily flattered, and are charmed by the graceful manners of these religious instructors. They are willing to listen to anything which has the appearance of religion, or of being beneficial to society in general. These are the type of people the teachers of error can rely upon. They have leisure, wealth, and influence; and once they have been won over to the cause, they are willing to spend time, effort, and money in getting this new teaching to others. Furthermore, being overwhelmed by their sins, they are easily tempted to seek the easiest method of relief. The many kinds of lust indicate, not only animal, but also the desire for change in doctrine and manner: hence, the running after fashionable teachers and their doctrine.

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Instead of concentrating their minds on the truth as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit, these "silly women" are always endeavoring to learn some novel doctrine which suits their fancy. (Acts 17: 21.) People of this type can easily weaken their power of comprehension to the point where it becomes practically impossible for them to grasp the truth. If anyone really desires the truth, he must learn that character comes before conduct in its quest. Jesus said, "If any man *willeth* to do his will, he shall know the teaching." (John 7: 17a.) The willingness, in the very nature of the case, must precede the doing. When people, reject the divine standard, they may continue to learn, but they will never know the truth.

An Example and an Assurance (2 Tim. 3: 8, 9)

And even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth. It is thought by Bible students that Jannes and

Jambres were two of the magicians, probably the chief of such men, who opposed Moses before Pharaoh. (Ex. 7: 11, 22.) Their purpose was to discredit Moses and Aaron and make it appear that they did not have any more power than did the magicians; but all who are familiar with the facts of that narrative are aware of the fate which came to them and to Pharaoh and his people for listening to them.

The heretics of Paul's day were following the example of Jannes and Jambres, that is, they were withstanding the truth, just as the ancient magicians did. It is unfortunate that that practice did not die with the false teachers now under consideration; but it did not. Every gospel preacher today has seen the method at work. When the Lord's plan of salvation for alien sinners is presented, the modern-day magicians immediately endeavor to show the people who need that salvation that it is not necessary for them to comply with the Lord's requirement for baptism. "Why, we have preachers who are better educated than those who are preaching that, and they say that it is not necessary for one to be baptized in order to be saved!"

Men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. These false teachers are described as being depraved in mind, and who could not meet the test so far as the standard of the gospel is concerned. (1 John 4: 1; Rev. 2: 2.) "Refuse silver shall men call them, because Jehovah hath rejected them." (Jer. 6: 30.) Paul graphically describes the fate of those teachers who pervert the gospel. (Gal. 1: 6-9.)

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be evident unto all men, as theirs also came to be.

Paul does not mean to say that the false teachers will not continue their insidious work, but rather that they would go so far, and no further. (2 Tim. 2: 16; 3: 13.) The folly of the magicians in Moses' day was exposed, and so will the folly of all false teachers meet a similar fate, sooner or later. There are few people today in this country who would accept the erroneous teaching of the heretics of Paul's day; it has been fully exposed and rejected. The same thing has been true of false teaching all

down through the ages. It is comparatively easy for the average person to see the truth regarding any

issue when the teaching in question is measured by the divine standard of the New Testament.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What can you say of the picture which Paul draws here?

What has always been the Lord's plan in this respect?

What is the only sure way to counteract such conditions? Give reasons for your answer.

Why isn't more attention given to this need for teaching God's word?

What often happens to congregations because of this lack?

The Golden Text

What is meant by the term "diligence"?

Why was Timothy urged to be diligent?

What is the greatest motive for service that anyone can have? Give reasons for your answer.

How did Jesus illustrate this truth?

Why wouldn't a workman of this kind be ashamed?

What is meant by handling aright the word of truth?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

A Description of the Times

What is the purpose of the term "but" in verse 1?

What period is indicated by "the last days"?

How are the last words of Paul, Peter, John, and Jude related to the Book of Revelation?

What is the general purpose of the last book in the New Testament?

How is the prophecy of that book related to history?

Do we know to what specific time Paul

had reference? Give reasons for your answer.

What is signified by lovers of self? Lovers of money?

What is meant by boastful? Haughty? Railers?

How is disobedience to parents related to being unthankful?

What is it to be unholy?

What is meant by natural affection? Implacable? Slanderers?

In what way without self-control? Fierce; No lovers of good?

What is meant by traitors? Headstrong? Puffed up?

What is signified by lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God?

How hold a form of godliness, but deny its power?

What was Timothy told to do regarding such people?

The Method of the False Teachers

In what way did these heretics work? Why?

What is meant by taking captive silly women?

Why were they such an easy prey?

What effect did their burden of sin and lustful desires have?

Why ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?

An Example and an Assurance

What example did Paul present?

Who were Jannes and Jambres? and what did they do?

In what way did the heretics of Paul's day follow their example?

Do we have any such practice today?

Give reason for your answer.

What is meant by being corrupted in mind, and reprobate concerning the faith?

Why would they proceed no further?

Lesson X—June 8, 1958

PAUL'S FINAL MESSAGE

Lesson Text

2 Tim. 4: 1-8, 16-18

1 I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Je'-sus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

2 Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts;

4 And will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.

5 But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.

6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.

7 I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

.....

16 At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.

17 But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles

might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. A-men'.

Golden Text.—*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith"* (2 Tim. 4: 7.)

Devotional Reading.—2 Tim. 4: 9-15.

Daily Bible Readings

June 2.	M.....	A Faithful Worker (Acts 20: 18-27)
June 3.	T.....	A Good Soldier (2 Tim. 2: 1-13)
June 4.	W.....	Ready to Die (2 Cor. 5: 1-10)
June 5.	T.....	Paul's Strait (Phil. 1: 20-30)
June 6.	F.....	Paul's Hope (Phil. 3: 7-16)
June 7.	S.....	Faithfulness in Stewardship (Tit. 1: 5-9)
June 8.	S.....	The Inheritance (1 Pet. 1: 4-7)

TIME.—A.D. 68.

Place.—Rome and Ephesus.

Persons.—Paul and Timothy.

Introduction

When we come to read the last letter of any person in whom we have a special interest, we are deeply affected in heart and mind; for we are keenly aware of the fact that we shall never have a further like message from him. Paul wrote more of the epistles of the New Testament than all the other writers combined; in fact, when we add all the separate books of the New Testament together, we find that Paul wrote one more than half of them. We, of course, are deeply interested in all of Paul's letters, as indeed we are in all the other books of the Divine Volume; but we are particularly concerned today with our interest in his last letter.

Paul's purpose in writing this letter has been admirably summed up in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. After noting that Timothy had been called by Paul to Rome, the writer says, "But Timothy was of a timid nature, and the journey was one which would imply peril, and possibly he may arrive too late to see St. Paul, or may have to face death himself; so he exhorts him to have cour-

age and to provide others who will be able to teach the truth, and warns him against the special dangers which are likely to beset his teachings. The interest of the epistle oscillates between St. Paul's desire for sympathy and his wish to strengthen Timothy's hands and to guard the deposit of the truth."

The expression "Give diligence to come before winter" (verse 21a.) implies that Paul expected to be in prison the following winter. It is thought that he was arrested and taken to prison about the middle of the previous winter. It is likely that his preliminary trial was held during the spring, after which he was returned to his prison. From his past experience (his two years' wait in Rome some five years before, Acts 28: 30, 31) Paul probably felt that there would be another long delay, which would extend into or probably through the coming winter. But instead, as Conybeare and Howson suppose, his condemnation and execution "actually" took place about midsummer."

The Golden Text

Inasmuch as the golden text of this lesson is in the body of the text to be considered, comment on it will be reserved until then. In the mean-

time, since this is the last of the Pauline epistles which have come down to us (Titus was written before Second Timothy), it is probably in

order to say a few words about Paul and his writing in general.

These letters of Paul are genuine letters, and they had evidently done that which he had intended for them to do. It is doubtful if he expected them to be published in book form, as we have them today. They were originally written to churches and individuals in whom he was interested, informal letters, for the most part; and as such, they are perhaps more precious than more formal letters would have been. They were closely interwoven with the church problems and personalities of their time; but the principles of truth and righteousness which they contain are applicable for all time.

He who truly reads Paul's letters does not merely see the pages and the ink, but looks through them as through a window, clear as crystal, into the house and home of Paul's soul, and into that glowing fire which sheds its radiance into the farthest bounds of the great Roman Empire. But Paul did not work alone; for it was Jesus who made him. The Lord changed his character. (2 Pet. 1:4.) Through the Holy Spirit he directed his thinking, his work, his gospel, and his epistles. Paul lay, as it were, in the hands of God as Christ through the Spirit enabled him to speak, work, and write. His work and words still stand as the work and words of God for men of all ages. And if Paul, perhaps the greatest exponent of Christianity the world has ever seen, aside from Jesus Christ himself, were asked to describe himself, he doubtless would reply simply, "A man in Christ." (2 Cor. 12: 2.)

The Final Summary of the Charge to Timothy (2 Tim. 4: 1-5)

I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus. The over-all charge which Paul gave to Timothy is contained in both the letters which he wrote to his son in the gospel. If one will read through both epistles and observe the number of times the word "charge" is found, he will have a much clearer idea of that which is meant by Paul's charge to Timothy. That which we have in the text now before us is the final summary of that charge; and it was impossible for it to have a more solemn and sublime

setting. It was given in the sight of God and his Son, Jesus Christ. The word "charge" literally means to testify earnestly, warn, adjure. This final summary of the charge follows the warning which Paul gave in the preceding chapter regarding the grievous times.

Who shall judge the living and the dead? The commission of Jesus to be the judge of the world at the last day came directly from God. "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son." (John 5: 22.) "And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead." (Acts 10: 42.) "Inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17: 31.) "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5: 10.) This divine picture should make a solemn impression upon the mind of every responsible person today.

The expression "the living and the dead" means that he will judge those who are living when he comes as well as those who are dead, that is, those who died before his coming. Peter spoke in the same vein when he said, "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead." (1 Pet. 4: 5.) No one will escape that awful day. When Jesus preached his great sermon on the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24 and 25), he warned his disciples of the final day of reckoning (Matt. 24: 45-51). He then added three illustrations, namely, the parable of the ten virgins, to show the necessity of being ready; the parable of the talents, to show how to get ready; and a picture of the judgment. All men, both living and dead, both good and bad, will be there.

And by his appearing and his kingdom. The charge to Timothy was also in view of the personal appear-

ance of Jesus when he comes to judge the world, and also of his kingdom. This probably means in view of the fact that he is a reigning king. He was commissioned of God to set up a kingdom and endeavor to bring men back to God, or in submission to his will; and men, of course, will be judged according to their reaction to his plea. The entire Old Testament was designed to lead men to the coming of Christ (2 Tim. 3: 15), and those who lived before Christ will be judged with reference to their attitude toward the will of God in former ages.

Preach the word. The word "preach" means to herald abroad or proclaim, to publish the good news. The word of God is the only thing Timothy was authorized to preach; and the charge should be understood in the light of 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." This is the reason why nothing but the word of God is needed: therefore to preach anything else would be superfluous.

Be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. This shows the manner in which Timothy, and all gospel preachers, as for that matter, must preach. The word "urgent" means to be on hand, to be ready to preach: and the expression "in season, out of season" signifies that the preaching must be done whether it comes at a convenient season for the hearers or not, or whether or not it is welcomed by them. The preaching must be done and those who hear it will be judged according to their reaction to it. (Rom. 2:

16.) To *reprove* is to reprehend severely, to endeavor to convince one of his sin with a view to correcting it. (1 Tim. 5: 20.) *Rebuke*, that is, speak seriously, warn in order to prevent an action or bring one to an end. To *exhort* is to beg, to appeal to one to do that which he should do. When one has been taught the truth, he should be urged to do it.

"With all longsuffering and teaching." This combination warns the preacher against losing patience and

resorting to harsh speech. People are not won to the better way by rebuke only; there must be sound and reasonable instruction as well. Vincent quotes Calvin as saying, "Those who are strong only in fervour and sharpness, but are not fortified with solid doctrine, weary themselves in their vigorous efforts, make a great noise, rave, . . . make no headway because they build without foundation." People should understand what they hear, and learn to perceive why they are rebuked.

For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine. The word "for" connects this statement with that which has just been said, that is, it points to the reason for the exhortation in the preceding passage. When people cease to regard the will of God as the supreme end in life, it is then that they think of a teacher, not as one who is to instruct their mind and guide their conduct, but one who should gratify their aesthetic sense. "The sound doctrine" has the marginal reading, *healthful teaching*, that is, correct doctrine. Vincent points out that the article "the," used in connection with teaching, plays a prominent part in the "pastoral epistles," and signifies more than teaching in general; it is the doctrine of the gospel.

But having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts. "Itching ears" are ears which must be tickled. No longer desiring the word of God, such people long for that which will please them. "And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, . . . ; for they hear thy words, but they do them not." (Ezek. 33: 32.) The term "heap" is used in the sense of accumulate.

And will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. It is a true saying that man's ear will not tolerate teachers who oppose the lusts of the hearts. The ears serve as a passage through which the truth may reach the understanding and heart; but when the understanding and heart have no desire for the truth, they are not going to listen to it. The *fables* were, probably traditional supplements to the law, Jewish allegorical interpretations of the law and stories of miracles, as well as certain pagan philosophies.

But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. The word "but" introduces a contrast. Timothy is not to be like the false teachers previously referred to, and, more especially, is he to refuse to preach so as to please those who turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside unto fables. To be sober is to control one's self, to be well-balanced, to be self-possessed under all circumstances. A life of godliness will bring opposition (2 Tim. 3: 12), and that will make it necessary for such a person to suffer hardship. An evangelist is one who proclaims the gospel. (Acts 8: 40; 21: 8.) Timothy's ministry was his service in general, the duties which had been assigned to him. The idea of fulfil may be gained from such passages as Acts 12: 25; 12: 25.

The Time for Paul's Departure (2 Tim. 4: 6-8)

For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. The words of this section of the lesson were spoken to stimulate Timothy to faithfulness. Observe the quiet courage with which Paul looked death in the face. He had faced death too often before to be afraid now. It should also be noted that the prospect of death did not dull his interest in the cause of Christ. There is great beauty and force in the metaphors which Paul used to describe death.

1. *A drink-offering or libation*—"I am already being poured out." (See margin.) 2. *A departure*. He pictured death as a going away. (Phil. 1: 23.)

I have fought the good fight. This is evidently the language of the Olympian games which Paul frequently used to illustrate his work. The definite article "the" should not be overlooked in this passage. It is used three times in verse 7. The good fight is compared to the contest in the arena. (1 Cor. 9: 24-27.) *I have finished the course.* (Acts 20: 24.) A runner who competes in a race not only puts forth a strenuous effort, but also runs over a marked-out and well-defined track. (2 Tim. 2: 5; Heb. 12: 1.) *I have kept the faith.* Paul drops the figure here and refers to his faithfulness as a steward. "The faith," that is, the truth of the

gospel had been committed to Paul, and he had been faithful to the trust. (1 Thess. 2: 4; 1 Tim. 1: 12.) Paul had not, as others had done, made shipwreck of the faith. (1 Tim. 1: 19.)

Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing. The crown not only consists of righteousness, but it is also the reward of the righteous. Such a crown awaited Paul and it also awaits all who "have loved his appearing," a habitual love and desire for his coming. (Heb. 9: 28; 2 Pet. 3: 11, 12.)

Paul's Abiding Faith in the Lord (2 Tim. 4: 16-18)

At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. This "first defence" cannot refer to Paul's first Roman imprisonment, the one mentioned in Acts 28: 30, 31; for it is clear from his letter to the Philippians, written during that time, that he was not forsaken. Much less can it refer to his Caesarean imprisonment. (Acts 24: 23.) Those who deny that Paul was twice imprisoned in Rome have difficulty in explaining what this defence was. But those who contend that he was in prison there twice regard his "first defence" as a preliminary investigation to which the apostle had to submit, during his second Roman imprisonment, after which he was returned to his prison cell. It appears that no Christian ventured to stand by Paul during this preliminary trial, so perilous was it to show any sympathy for the aged apostle. This was evidently the first that Timothy had heard about this experience. "May it not be laid to their account." (Acts 7: 6.)

But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me: that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. When men fail, the Lord is near. Paul had long proclaimed this doctrine and it proved to be true in his own case. (Phil. 4: 13.) The "Gentiles" were probably those who were at his preliminary hearing, and those who would hear of the gospel

through those who were there in person. This is a good commentary on Paul's statement in Rom. 8: 28: "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose." God had called Paul to preach to the Gentiles. (Acts 26: 16-18.) The term "lion" refers to some great danger, possibly to death in the arena.

The Lord will deliver me from every work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. This was Paul's supreme confidence in the Lord. Bengel calls this hope drawing its conclusions for the future from the past. The Lord had never failed Paul, and he was confident that he never would. (2 Tim. 1: 12.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

How are people usually affected by a "last letter"?
How much of the New Testament did Paul write?
Why did Paul write this letter to Timothy?
What is your impression of the genuineness of Paul's letters?
What can you say of the extent of Paul's influence? Discuss fully.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED The Final Summary of the Charge to Timothy

What was the over-all charge which Paul gave to Timothy?
In what sense is this text a summary of the charge? Give reasons for your answer.
What adds solemnity to this charge?
In what sense "judge the living and the dead"?
Who authorized Jesus to be the judge?
Who will be present at the judgment? Discuss fully.
What is meant by "his appearing and his kingdom"?
What was Timothy to preach? and why?
What does it mean to be urgent in season, out of season?
What is meant by reprove? rebuke? exhort?
Why with "all longsuffering and teaching"?
What condition did Paul say would come? Do you see any evidence of it now? Give reasons for your answer.

What is meant by "sound doctrine"?
What are itching ears? and how could that condition be eased?
How heap teachers after their own lusts? Why would they turn from the truth unto fables?
What did Paul mean by telling Timothy to be sober in all things?
What is the work of an evangelist?
How fulfill his ministry? and what ministry?

The Time for Paul's Departure

Why did Paul speak of his own passing? and under what figures?
What did he mean by the good fight?
What was "the course"?
How had he kept "the faith"?
What reward was waiting for him? and why was it called the crown of righteousness?
Who else has the right to hope for that reward?
What does it mean to love his appearing?

Paul's Abiding Faith in the Lord

What did Paul mean by his "first defence"? and what does that imply?
Why did no one take his part?
What prayer did he offer for them?
Who did stand by Paul? and why?
What "Gentiles might hear"?
What was the mouth of the lion?
What did Paul say the Lord would do for him?
What is meant by saying that hope draws its conclusions for the future from the past?
Why did Paul have such confidence? Is it possible for us to have that confidence?

Lesson XI—June 15, 1958

PAUL WRITES TO TITUS

Lesson Text

Tit. 1: 1-5, 12-16

1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Je-sus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal;

3 But in his own seasons mani-

festated his word in the message, wherewith I was intrusted according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

4 To Ti-tus, my true child after a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Je-sus our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in

Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge;

12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said,

Cre'tans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons.

13 This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

15 To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

16 They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Golden TEXT.—*"Bitt speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine."* (Tit. 2: 1.)

Devotional Reading.—Tit. 1: 6-11.

Daily Bible Readings

June 9. M.....	Christian Sonship (1 John 3: 1-6)
June 10. T.....	Christian Speech (James 3)
June 11. W.....	Character of the Christian (Col. 3: 1-17)
June 12. T.....	Christian Fellowship (1 John 1: 1-7)
June 13. F.....	Christian Fruitfulness (John 15: 1-16)
June 14. S.....	Faithful Companions (Rom. 16: 1-27)
June 15. S.....	Titus' Nationality (Gal. 2: 1-9)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 67.

Place.—Ephesus and Crete.

Persons.—Paul and Titus.

Introduction

Ramsay calls Titus the most enigmatic figure in early Christian history. The name of this able and devoted companion of Paul is not found in the Book of Acts. The only New Testament references to him are in Second Corinthians, Galatians, Second Timothy, and the epistle which bears his name. The only thing that is known about his origin is that he was a Gentile. His birthplace is not known, but it may have been in Antioch in Syria, since he seems to have been living there when he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for the conference of Acts 15. (Gal. 2: 1.)

In commenting on the omission of Titus' name from the Book of Acts, Ramsay says, "The only strange fact in reference to Titus, is that he nowhere appears in *Acts*; and that is equally hard to explain on every theory. Clearly he played a considerable part in the early history of the church (as Luke himself did); and, on our hypothesis of Luke's historical insight and power of selecting and grouping details, the complete omission of Titus' name must

be intentional, just as the silence about Luke is intentional." The nearest approach to the mention of Luke in Acts is to be found in the famous "we" passages of that book. See Acts 16: 10-17; 20: 6-15; 27: 1-8, and on through the remaining part of the book.

A suggestion as to the possible explanation of the omission of the name of Titus from Acts is made by Ramsay, as follows: "Perhaps Titus was the relative of Luke; and Eusebius found this statement (referred to above) in an old tradition, attached to 2 Cor. VIII 18, XII 18, where Titus and Luke (the latter not named by Paul, but identified by an early tradition) are associated as envoys to Corinth. Luke, as we may suppose, thought it right to omit his relative's name, as he did his own name, from his history. There is not sufficient evidence to justify an opinion; but this conjecture brings together an enigmatic expression in Eusebius and a serious difficulty in *Acts*, and finds in each a satisfactory solution of the other."

. No one can read that which Paul

says about Titus without being impressed with the idea that the latter was evidently one of the most congenial and useful of all the apostle's

assistants. We should enter into the study of the epistle which bears his name, therefore, with a great deal of anticipation.

The Golden Text

"But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine" This passage may be thought of as Titus' personal commission; and it is to be understood in the light of the preceding chapter, especially the last two paragraphs. Paul had told Titus to see to it that the right kind of men be put into the eldership, and then in the remainder of the chapter he gives a rather detailed description of the immoral condition which prevailed in Crete. Titus' responsibility therefore was great, and Paul's statement here gives some idea of its scope.

In contrast with the false teachers, then, Titus is urged to "speak." He must not be silent, but must express himself, that is, he must continuously impress the moral duties of the gospel

upon the people of every age and class.

"The things which befit the sound doctrine" marks the limit of the leaching which Titus was authorized to do. The word "befit" is used in the sense of "become," or that which is *proper*. (Matt. 3: 15; Eph. 5: 3; 1 Tim. 2: 10; Heb. 2: 10.) "Sound doctrine" is healthful teaching. (See margin.) Such teaching is reasonable and appeals to *sound* intelligence. This admonition which Paul gave to Titus was the same in scope as that which he gave to Timothy, when he said, "Preach the word." (2 Tim. 4: 2a.) The word of God is all that is needed to make men "complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; Col. 1: 9, 10.)

The Text Explained

The Salutation (Tit. 1: 1-4)

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ. This is the only place in Paul's writings where he refers to himself as "a servant of God." (Rom. 1: 1; James 1: 1.) The term "servant" literally means a bondservant—he was bound to God. This general designation is followed by the special appellation, "an apostle of Jesus Christ." The whole title, no doubt, was intended to invest Titus with the necessary authority or backing for the carrying out of his commission. Paul's relation to God and Christ made it the same as if they had personally given Titus his instruction.

According to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness. The word "according" (*kata*) apparently expresses the aim of Paul's apostleship. Goodspeed renders the passage, "To arouse faith in those whom God has chosen, and the comprehension of religious truth." Weymouth puts it this way, "For furthering the faith of God's elect and a knowledge of the truths of religion." The Expositor's Greek Testament has this clearing

version, "For the confirmation of the faith of God's elect, and for the spreading of the knowledge" of the truth which is according to godliness. God's elect are God's people who have been redeemed from sin. (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14; 2 Pet. 1: 10, 11.)

In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal. Paul was not talking about his personal hope of eternal life, but that the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth, which he aimed to bring about, was in *order* that men might have such a hope. The whole system which he was authorized to preach was designed for that purpose. Eternal life is a state of well-being which will continue forever. Its nature includes both *quality* and *duration*. It begins with the redemption of the soul and will continue without end, if we are faithful. The following comment by Hall L. Calhoun should help all of us to realize the seriousness of life here, if we expect to live eternally with God over there:

'One thing seems very certain—viz., that we shall carry with us into the hereafter the personalities we develop here. Character is a matter of

our own creation and development. It is what we really are. It cannot be arbitrarily assumed nor gotten rid of. The character that I develop in this life is the one that I shall take with me into the hereafter with which to begin my life there. There is no good reason to suppose that it will be at all different just because I enter another state of being."

When it is said that God cannot lie, that is another way of saying that he always speaks the truth. We are told in Rom. 3: 4, "Let God be found true, but every man a liar"; and in Heb. 6: 18, that "it is impossible for God to lie." Anything he speaks therefore is true. He is free from all deceit and is entirely trustworthy. God's promise regarding eternal life was made "long ages ago." (See margin.)

But in his own seasons manifested his word in the message, wherewith I was intrusted according to the commandment of God our Saviour. God's purpose regarding the salvation of his people was formed before the world began, and his promise regarding it was made long ages ago, but at the proper time it was manifested, that is, revealed or made known, by the proclamation of his word. Paul was intrusted with this preaching, along with the other apostles. (2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) God is here called our Saviour, a title which is applied to both him and Christ. (Tit. 3: 4-6.)

To Titus, my true child after a common faith. This implies that Titus was converted to Christ by Paul, although we do not know when or where his conversion took place. It has already been pointed out in this lesson that the name of Titus does not appear in the Book of Acts, although it is a known fact that Titus was active in the work during the time the events of much of the latter part of that history was taking place. Titus is mentioned by name nine times in the Book of Second Corinthians. His name is also found in Galatians and Second Timothy, in addition to the book which bears his name. The "common faith" is the faith which is common to all Christians, Paul and Titus, of course, included. (2 Pet. 1: 1.)

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.

Grace is favor, while peace is tranquility, a blessing which flows from the favor of God and his Son.

The Reason for Leaving Titus in

Crete
(Tit. 1: 5)

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every thee charge. The island of Crete was of considerable size and was located in the Mediterranean Sea, almost equidistant from Europe, Asia, and Africa. (See map.) Some time after Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment, it appears that he and Titus did some missionary work on that island. It is not known whether or not this was the first gospel preaching which was done there. There were representatives from Crete present on the memorable Pentecost of Acts 2 (verse 11), and it is possible that some of them were converted during the early days of the church, and later returned to their native land and established the work there.

But be that as it may, it is evident

from Paul's letter to Titus that the churches on the island of Crete were lacking in proper leadership and other characteristics which are essential for a vigorous work, such as the Lord is pleased with. We do not know why Paul left before that work was completed, but it was probably due to the shortness of the time which was at his disposal. There were, no doubt, many things in different places which demanded his personal attention, and he left the details, when such was possible, in the hands of his capable and trusted helpers.

We are not specifically told what

all "the things that were wanting" were, and we can only infer regarding them from that which is said in the letter to Titus; but we do know that among those things was the need for elders "in every city." Elders are the overseers and shepherds of the people of God, and the New Testament makes it very clear that each congregation, when fully set in order, had a plurality of such men.

The task of selecting the proper men for the eldership carries with it

a tremendous responsibility, and especially so when it is remembered that it is often the case that men who are not qualified aspire to the office. Titus therefore would need an authoritative statement from Paul to give him the needed prestige for an acceptable work in this respect. Paul had charged him to "set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge." (Tit. 1:5, 6)

Paul of Opposition Confronting

the Churches in Crete

(Tit. 1: 12-16)

One of themselves, a prophet of

their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. In order to get the full picture of the conditions which prevailed in Crete, we should begin reading with the beginning of the paragraph from which this section of the lesson is taken. "For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Verses 10, 11.)

Following the statement just

quoted, Paul introduced the testimony of one of their own prophets to confirm that which he had just said. This prophet was Epimenides who lived about 600 B.C. Similar testimony is also given by Livy, Polybius, Strabo, and other ancient writers. Plutarch Æmilius (Sec. 23) says that "the Cretans are as eager for riches as bees for honey." The untrustworthy character of the Cretans therefore was proverbial. Such conditions were a great challenge to a faithful gospel preacher, and it is not surprising to read this word from Paul to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge."

The materials with which Titus had

to work in building up the Cretan churches were of the most rugged kind. And when we consider that

he was isolated and unsupported in this position, it is easy to see how much need there was for strong character for such an assignment. And when we take into consideration the kind of man Titus was, we cannot doubt that he arose to the standard which Paul set before him—namely, "In all things showing thyself an example, of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us." (Tit. 2: 7, 8.)

Paul's charge to "reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith," reminds us of a similar charge which was given to Timothy. (2 Tim. 4: 1-5.) If people would read the Bible and manifest a desire to do right, they would see that when they are reprov'd for their short comings by a faithful gospel preacher, it is for their own good—that they may be sound in the faith. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. These Jewish fables were some type of false teaching which was being done. It is possible that they formed the transition stage to Gnosticism. The error is described in the epistles to Timothy and Titus as profitless, that is, not tending to godliness, rather than openly opposed to the faith. But if such things are allowed to continue, they will in time openly oppose the faith. The commandments of men who turn away from the truth were probably those relating to ascetic abstinence. (1 Tim. 4: 3; Col. 2: 20-23; Mark 7: 7-9.) Such practices were opposed to the truth, that is, they were not authorized.

To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. The contrast here is between the faithful Christians, those who are pure in heart, and the ascetic teachers, those who arbitrarily pronounce some food unclean. The same idea is found in 1 Tim. 4: 1-5: "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to se-

ducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer." (Rom. 14: 1-6, 20-23.)

They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. Paul told Timothy that the time would come when some would hold a form of godliness, but would deny the power thereof. (2 Tim. 3:5.) The contrast here is between their pro-

fession and their actual deeds. Their knowledge of God was only theoretical; their practice was a denial of him: their lives gave the lie to their profession. The word "abominable" means detestable, while "reprobate" is worthless or unfit for any good deed. Paul told Timothy that "every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) The people about whom Paul wrote to Titus were disobedient to that word, and were as a result worthless, that is, unfitted for any good work. People either grow better in the service of God, or they grow worse. There is no such thing as standing still in God's sight.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

How much do we really know of Titus?

How do you explain the fact that his name does not occur in Acts?

How did Paul evidently regard him?

In what books of the New Testament do we read of Titus?

The Golden Text

What was the purpose of this text?

How may it best be understood?

What are the things which befit the sound doctrine?

What does "befit" mean?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Salutation

What does it mean to be a servant of God?

Why mention the fact that he was a servant of God and an apostle of Christ?

What did Paul mean by "according to the faith of God's elect," etc.?

How are faith and knowledge related to eternal life?

What is meant by eternal life?

How is character related to eternal life?

When is character developed? and how?

What is meant by saying that God cannot lie?

When and how was God's promise regarding eternal life made known?

With what was Paul intrusted?

How are God and Christ both our Saviour?

In what sense was Titus Paul's true child?

What is meant by a common faith?

What do grace and peace mean? and how are they related?

The Reason for Leaving Titus in Crete

Where and what is Crete?

When did Paul and Titus preach there?

Was that the first preaching done there?

Give reasons for your answer.

Why did Paul leave Titus there?

What were the things that were wanting?

Why appoint elders in every city?

What is involved in the task of selecting elders?

Why would Titus need a statement from Paul regarding this matter?

The Type of Opposition Confronting the Churches in Crete

What were the general conditions on the island at that time?

Why did Paul quote from one of their prophets? and how did he feel about his testimony?

What can you say of the wisdom of Paul in selecting Titus for the work there?

Why was he to reprove them sharply?

What was some of the false teaching being done?

What did Paul mean by saying, "to the pure all things are pure," etc.?

Why is nothing pure to the unbelieving?

What profession did they make?

How did their lives affect their profession?

Lesson XII—June 22, 1958

CHRISTIAN DUTIES

Lesson Text

Tit. 2: 1-10

1 But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine:

2 That aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience:

3 That aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good;

4 That they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 To be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed:

6 The younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded:

7 In all things showing thyself an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity,

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us.

9 Exhort servants to be in subjection to their own masters, and to be well-pleasing to them in all things; not gainsaying;

10 Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Golden Text.—“*Let no man despise thee*” (Tit. 2: 15b.)

Devotional Heading.—Tit. 2: 11-15.

Daily Bible Readings

June 16. M.	.....Duty to God (Deut. 30: 15-20)
June 17. T.	.....Duty to the Civil Power (Matt. 22: 15-22)
June 18. W.	.....Duty to Ourselves (2 Tim. 2: 15-26)
June 19. T.	.....Duty to Others (Matt. 22: 36-40)
June 20. F.	.....Duty to the Poor (Luke 10: 25-37)
June 21. S.	.....Duty to Christ (Matt. 25: 34-46)
June 22. S.	.....Duty to Our Parents (Matt. 7: 10-13)

Time.—A.D. 67.

Place.—Ephesus and Crete.

Persons.—Paul and Titus.

Introduction

Christianity has been defined as the reproduction of the life of Jesus in the human heart. This is an obligation which belongs to every child of God, or, which is the same thing, every Christian is under obligation to reproduce the life of Christ in his own heart. Paul expressed this idea in Gal. 4: 19, when he said “My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you.” This means, according to Thayer, “until a mind and life in complete harmony with the mind and life of Christ shall have been formed in you.”

The lesson before us today has a word of practical counsel for several distinct classes of people. Paul knew the value of being definite, and he always had a tremendous

reason for the simplest duty; his motives were always great and far-reaching. One of the distinctive features of Christianity is that every act is linked to some eternal purpose, or, to state the same thing in other words, high motives are assigned for all human conduct. In the lesson now before us, the matter of duty is prefaced by a statement regarding sound doctrine: “But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine.” All Christian injunctions and precepts rest on that truth.

Every child of God should ever keep before him the fact that *truth and duty are always linked together*. There is no truth which has no corresponding duty; and there is no duty for which there is no corresponding truth. Too many people

try to learn truths as if there are no duties belonging to them, and as if the knowing of them would make no difference in the way they live. (John 7: 17; James 1: 23-25; 4: 17.) That attitude is the reason their hold on the truth is so weak.

In like manner, there are those who are always trying to perform duties as if there were no truths behind them, that is, as if they were mere arbitrary things which rest on

no principle and have no intelligible reasons. That is the reason they perform that which they do so superficially and unreliably. When, every truth is rounded into its duty, and every duty is made to depend upon its truth, then we shall have a clearness, a consistency, and a permanence of moral and religious life of which we hardly dream now. This is the idea to be emphasized in this lesson.

The Golden Text

"Let no man despise thee" In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he said, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. 4: 12.) The idea is that the preacher is to conduct himself in such a way as to command the respect of the congregation. He is armed with the authority of God's word, and that will make him invulnerable, provided his character and conduct are as they should be. The preacher must "take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4: 16.)

The preacher, however, is not the only one who has responsibility in this respect; those who are taught are also under great obligation. If it is his duty to teach, it is their duty to hear and consider that which is said. The original word for "despise" literally means *to think around, beyond, or above*; and that is exactly what some people do when they are not sincerely seeking the will of God, so that they can please him. But when the preacher is what he should be, and when he obeys the injunction, "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority," he will have the re-

spect of those who want to please God. And, conversely, when people are sincerely seeking to know and do the will of God, they will have the proper attitude toward those who are trying to teach his word.

Adam Clarke's observation on the second chapter of Titus is worthy of due consideration. He says in part, "Few portions of the New Testament excel this chapter. It may well form the creed, system of ethics, and text book of every Christian preacher. Does any man inquire what is the duty of a gospel minister? Send him to the second chapter of the Epistle to Titus for a complete answer. There he will find what he is to *believe*, what he is to *practice*, and what he is to *preach*. Even his congregation is parcelled out to him. The *old* and the *young* of both sexes, and those who are in their employment, are considered to be the objects of his ministry; and a plan of teaching, in reference to those different descriptions of society, is laid down before him. He finds here the *doctrine* which he is to preach to them, the *duties* which he is required to inculcate, the *motives* by which his exhortations are to be strengthened, and the *end* which both he and his people should have invariably in view."

The Text Explained

Good Conduct Should Follow Good Teaching (Tit. 2: 1-6)

But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine. In the preceding chapter, Paul described the immoral character of the Cretans, and now, in contrast with that, he wants Titus to impress upon the brethren the need for a well-

regulated social order within the church, an order which springs from the saving grace of God as revealed in Christ. Paul showed in chapter 1 how false teaching leads away from God, and now he exhorts Titus to speak those things which are becoming to sound doctrine, that is, things which are in keeping with sound teaching. It is only by doing

this that the desired results can be obtained.

That aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience. The term "aged" is used here in the sense of an older man in the church, and not in the sense of an officer, that is, an elder. *Temperate* is usually thought of in connection with the use of intoxicant liquors. It does apply in that regard, but it is not limited to that area. The reference is more to a way of life. Such a man should live a life of self-restraint and not go to excess in anything.

Grave means to be dignified, serious, worthy of respect. *Sober-minded* is to be prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled. *Sound in faith* requires that one have a correct understanding of the teaching, and a healthy attitude toward it. In a practical sense, the idea is that he must know that which the Bible teaches and must put his confidence in that which it says. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.) A weekly, distrustful faith cannot please God. *Love* must be the guiding principle of his life. (1 Cor. 13; 1 John 5: 3.) *Patience* means steadfastness. (Rom. 5: 1-5; James 1: 2-4.)

That aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good. The reference here is obviously to the older women in the church. *Reverent in demeanor* means behavior, conduct, deportment, worthy of reverence. *Slanderers* are those who utter false reports maliciously, reports which tend to defame or injure the reputation of another. This term is applied to the devil. (1 Pet. 5: 8; Rev. 12: 9, 10; Job 1: 6-12; 2: 1-6.) To be *enslaved to much wine* is to be overcome by the habit. Bengel observes that it is indeed slavery not to overcome the appetite. (2 Pet. 2: 19.) *The Expositor's Greek Testament* notes that "it is proved by experience that the reclamation of a woman drunkard is almost impossible." *Teachers of that which is good* is the positive duty of elderly Christian women, a duty which is so often either ignored or neglected.

That they may train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children. This shows the direction which the instruction of the older women is to take. It should be observed here that it is possible for women to be trained to be husband-lovers and children-lovers. This attitude, of course, is not one-sided. Paul teaches men to love their wives as they love themselves. (Eph. 5: 22-33.) He closes the chapter by saying, "Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one of his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband." The for "fear" in this passage means respect, treat with deference or reverential obedience. There is no way to estimate the number of broken or unhappy homes which could have been saved, if the aged women, the godly mothers in Israel, had made the effort to teach the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children.

To be *sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.* To be *sober-minded* is to have a well-balanced mind; *chaste* means to be pure in heart and lives; *workers at home* are home makers, guardians of the house, active in household duties. (1 Tim. 5: 13.) To be *kind* is to have a gracious, benign demeanor. *Being in subjection to their own husbands* will come as a natural consequence, if they love them and have regard for God's word. This is not only God's will, but it will result in greater happiness and lead to the ultimate good. "In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives; beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear," that is proper regard or respect. (1 Pet. 3: 1, 2.)

That the word of God be not blasphemed. Christian people are certain to make some kind of impression on the society in which they live; and it is not unreasonable to say that the practical worth of one's religion is not unfairly judged by the effect it has on the life and character of its professor. Therefore, if the effect of the Christian religion is to make worse wives, it not only would

not commend itself to those on the outside, but would actually result in their blaspheming the word which authorized the religion. (Rom. 2: 24.) Many people do not judge doctrine by the doctrine itself: they make the character and conduct of its professors the test of the teaching.

The younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded: That is, be reasonable, sensible, serious, keep one's head. It is interesting to observe that only one word is used to set forth the moral duty of the younger men, namely, *sober-minded*; but it is evident that this one word includes the whole intention of the apostle's exhortation; for it contains everything in which the moral influence of Christianity may be displayed.

The younger men should be made to realize that the future of the church, to a very great extent, depends upon them; for from their midst will come the future leaders of the church. And, too, a young man who cannot control himself, gives little promise of being useful and happy. Indulgence in the sinful practices toward which young men are inclined, will ultimately result in the destruction of both body and soul. Younger men are in that period of life when they are exposed to unusual temptations, and they need to exercise peculiar care with reference to their conduct.

Young men, as well as the old, are subject to the death of the body, and they should, of course, be ready at all times to stand before God in judgment. A young man who feels that he might soon be called before his Maker, will be more likely to be reasonable in all he thinks and does, and learn the meaning and value of what it is to be sensible, serious, and to keep his own head. The psalmist, in the long ago, asked, "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?" and then immediately gave the answer, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." (Psalm 119: 9.)

The Power of Example (Tit. 2: 7, 8)

In all things showing thyself an ensample of good works. The exhortation by word, which Paul authorized Titus to give, must be followed by the exhortation of example.

In other words, if a preacher's work is to be effective, he himself must practice that which he preaches. Nothing is more disgusting than to see a preacher urge others to do that which he himself is not willing to do. The apostle's exhortation to the preacher therefore is, "In all things showing thyself an ensample of good works." The word "ensample" means a pattern or example.

In thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned. The doctrine which Titus taught must be characterized by certain definite marks.

1. *Uncorruptness*, that is, present a pure doctrine, unmixed with the philosophies of men. Teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. 2. *Gravity*, that is, be reverent, dignified, and serious. 3. *Sound speech*, that cannot be condemned, that is, teaching which does not deviate from the truth (Thayer). Sound speech that cannot be condemned is preaching which is beyond reproach, or which cannot be justly censured.

That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us. Truth coupled with innocence has a powerful effect even upon the opposition. When a person is sound in doctrine, pure in life, and upright in attitude, it is very difficult for a critic to find anything which he can lay hold on and use to the discredit of the teacher of God's word. He will therefore be put to shame for opposing such teaching. This same principle is applicable to Christian living: "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2: 11, 12.)

A Word to Servants (Tit. 2: 9, 10)

Exhort servants to be in subjection to their own masters, and to be well-pleasing to them in all things: not gainsaying; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity. Before commenting directly on the text now before us, it is perhaps in order to say

a few words on the question of Christianity and slavery.

It is a noticeable fact that no New Testament writer ever made a direct attack on slavery as an institution. No one of them ever commanded, or even suggested, that masters free their slaves. But they did teach a spirit which moderated the harshness of the system, and which would ultimately destroy it by peaceful means. Take, for example, the exhalation of the essential dignity and eternal value of the human soul. That sounds innocent and harmless enough, but watch it come into collision with the system of slavery! New Testament writers relied upon the spirit of the gospel, and the principles which it sets forth to the effect that all men are brethren in Christ and alike servants of one heavenly Father, to destroy the whole institution of human slavery.

The gospel enjoins people in all conditions of life to be exemplary in their conduct. (1 Cor. 7: 20-24; 1 Pet. 2: 18.) The harder the lot of the slave, and the more unendurable this might appear to the Christian slave who was conscious of his dignity in Christ, the more necessary it was to impress upon him the neces-

sity of his being in subjection to his master, and to make an honest effort to please him in all things. This is the true spirit of Christianity. To *gainsay* is to contradict, to speak against, to object to, to argue about a matter. This is the direct opposite of cheerful and willing obedience. *Purloining* means to take that which has been intrusted to him and appropriate it for his own use. (Luke 16: 1-8; Josh. 7: 1.) The word for "showing" in the expression "showing all good fidelity," carries with it the idea of demonstrating; and that was done when the servant displayed the utmost trustworthiness.

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. When a slave, in obedience to the gospel of Christ, could show that he was a better slave because he was a Christian, that was to make the teaching of the Saviour of men attractive to others. The word for "adorn" means, according to Arndt and Gingrich, *that they may do credit to the teaching in all respects*. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 16.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
What is your idea of its importance? Give reasons for your answer.
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

How would you define Christianity?
Why is every Christian obligated to reproduce the life of Christ in his own heart and life?
What is the scope of the lesson for today?
How did Paul connect motives and conduct? Discuss fully.
Why is that always necessary?
How are truth and duty related?
Show how this relation works in the average life.

The Golden Text

What did Paul mean by saying, Let no man despise thee?
Does this responsibility relate to those who are not preachers? Give reasons for your answer.
What does the word "despise" literally mean?
Why did Titus have to back up his work?
Give a general summary of the second chapter of Titus.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Good Conduct Should Follow Good Teaching

What contrast does the word "but" introduce?

What are the things which befit the sound doctrine?
Who were the "aged men," and what were they to do?
What do the terms temperate, grave, and sober-minded imply?
What does it mean to be sound in faith, in love, in patience?
What were the aged women exhorted to do?
What is it to be reverent in demeanor?
What is a slanderer?
What is implied in being enslaved to much wine?
What are the aged women to teach?
What is one of the principal purposes of this teaching?
How can younger women be taught to love their husbands and children?
What other duties are incumbent upon the younger women? Discuss each fully.
What is the object of all of this?
How would a lack of it cause the word of God to be blasphemed?
What were the younger men told to do?
What is involved in being sober-minded?

The Power of Example

What was Titus exhorted to do?
What is the value of example in a preacher's life? Discuss fully.
What was to characterize his doctrine? Discuss each point separately.
What is one of the prime effects of such teaching?

A Word to Servants

How does the New Testament deal with the subject of slavery.

What were the servants exhorted to do?

What do the terms "gainsay" and "purloin" mean?

How can servants show all good fidelity?

What is the purpose of all this?

How may one adorn the doctrine of God?

Lesson XIII—June 29, 1958

WASHING OF REGENERATION

Lesson Text

Tit. 3: 1-8

1 Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men.

3 For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

4 But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared,

5 Not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but ac-

cording to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

6 Which he poured out upon us richly, through Je-sus Christ our Saviour;

7 That, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I desire that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men:

Golden Text.—*"For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men"* (Tit. 2: 11.)

Devotional Reading.—Tit. 3: 9-15.

Daily Bible Readings

June 23. M.

June 24. T.

June 25. W.

June 26. T.

June 27. F.

June 28. S.

June 29. S.

All Things New (Rev. 21: 1-7)

The New Birth (John 3: 3-8)

New Creatures (Eph. 4: 17-24)

..... Life in Christ (John 10: 7-18)

..... Renewed Daily (2 Cor. 4: 7-17)

..... Sins Washed Away (Acts 22: 1-16)

In Christ a New Creation (2 Cor. 5: 11-19)

TIME.—A.D. 67.

PLACE.—Ephesus and Crete.

PERSONS.—Paul and Titus.

Introduction

There are some subjects set forth in the Scriptures which have occupied a greater place in the thinking of Bible students than others. The lesson under consideration at this time contains such a question. The "washing of regeneration" is a subject which has called forth some of the greatest efforts on the part of those men who have endeavored to decipher difficult statements, and it has furnished the occasion for some of the greatest controversies which have engaged the attention of students of the Bible.

The original word for "regenera-

tion" is found only twice in the entire New Testament. (Matt. 19: 28 and Tit. 3: 5.) In the former passage it is generally understood to mean a *new state of affairs*, rather than of persons. The word is used in the sense of revolution, change, or renovation. There may be some question as to just what new order is referred to, whether to the approaching Christian dispensation, or to the new heaven and earth mentioned in Rev. 21: 1-5; but there is hardly any disposition on the part of any one to dispute the fact that a new era is contemplated. But in Tit.

3: 5 the reference is to the change which takes place in people at their conversion. The one reference is to a new state of affairs; the other, to a change which is brought about in people.

Our purpose in this study is to try to discover just what is involved in the washing of regeneration, as set forth in the text. This can best be done by giving due consideration to the context itself, and then by examining related passages in other parts of the Bible. It should be

obvious to any thoughtful person that a correct understanding of any Bible subject is possible only when all the principal terms used by inspired writers are given the same place and meaning which they had when they were first placed in the divine record. The original words of the Scriptures never change their meaning. Therefore, if we can discover that which the inspired writers meant by the terms they used, our understanding of any given passage will automatically follow.

The Golden Text

"For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" All informed Bible students are agreed that salvation is ours by the grace of God. Paul says in Eph. 2: 8, 9: "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory." The practical meaning of grace is favor—unmerited favor, or a benefit bestowed upon one who does not deserve it. There is nothing which the receiver can do to merit the blessing; he can only appropriate it. (Rom. 4: 4, 5.)

The statement that the grace of God "hath appeared" implies that it had a previous existence; and since it is the *grace of God*, no violence is done the Scriptures when we say that it dwelt in the heart of God from the beginning. The same original word which is here translated "appeared" is rendered "shone" in

Acts 27: 20. The grace of God which brings salvation appeared with the coming of Christ. Grace, as used in this text, is a comprehensive word and includes all that the divine side did to bring about our salvation.

The word "salvation" implies a lost condition—a danger or disease; and since it is brought to "all men," the implication is that all men are in need of it. Paul told the Galatians that "the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. 3: 22; Rom. 3: 9.) All men therefore are afflicted and stand in imminent and deadly peril. Salvation is offered to all (Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 3: 9), but all will not accept it (John 5: 40; Matt. 7: 13, 14). Salvation must be *accepted* if it is to benefit the lost. It is available to all who will take it. A corked bottle of medicine will not do a sick man any good.

The Text Explained

The Christian Attitude Toward Unbelievers (Tit. 3: 1-3)

Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work. Taking an over-all view of Tit. 2: 1-3: 8, we have a sketch of the true features of Christian character which Titus was exhorted to enforce. The entire second chapter is devoted to the social order of the Christians among themselves, along with the motive which should prompt their action; while the first eight verses of chapter 3, the section which is the basis for our lesson today, set forth the attitude which Christians should manifest toward the outer

world. Christianity affects the entire relationship of those who embrace it.

The expression "put them in mind" is used in the sense of bringing to their attention that which the Lord has ordained for them, that is, to be in subjection to rulers and authorities. The term "ruler" indicates an officer of the first rank, probably the emperor in this case; while "authorities" are high governmental officials. Nero, the last of the line of Caesars, was the emperor at the time Paul wrote his letter to Titus, and was a persecutor of the Christians. Yet the Lord's people were exhorted to be in subjection to him. The fact that Paul exhorted the

Christians in Ephesus to *pray* for all such high officials, including Nero who was emperor at the time First Timothy was written (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2), while in the case of the Cretans he enjoined only the more *elementary duty of obedience*, may indicate to some extent the difference in the cultural status of the two peoples. Rom. 13: 1-7 and 1 Pet. 2: 13-17 are a good commentary on the passage now before us.

There is no practical difference between being "in subjection to" and in being "obedient" to rulers and authorities. Technically, one is in subjection to another when he subordinates himself to him, and then he obeys his superior when he does that which he is told to do. The term "good" is significant in the expression "to be ready unto every good work," since it points to the limits wherein Christians are to be ready to obey the will of authorities. They are not to do evil that good may come. (Acts 4: 19, 20; 5: 29.)

To *speak evil of no man*. That is, do not speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, or calumniate any one, and especially the rulers and authorities. This is a sin which is all too common among professed Christians.

Not be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men. To be contentious is to be quarrelsome, attacking others, and generally unwilling to cooperate and be obedient. "Not to be contentious" is one of the qualifications of elders. (1 Tim. 3: 3.) Christians should be gentle in their attitude toward others, and especially those who oppose them. Instead of demanding that their rights be respected, the Lord's people should manifest a spirit of forbearance. "Let your forbearance be known unto all men." (Phil. 4: 5a.) The marginal reading for forbearance in this passage is *gentleness*. The word "meekness" means gentleness of strength; so all of these terms taken together will give some idea of the kind of person a Christian should be.

For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. It frequently happens that Christian people are inclined to lose patience with those who are living in the flesh, but if they would only

take the time to review their own past lives, they would find that they do not have anything to boast of. Furthermore, when we remember that we are a living example of that which God's grace can do for those who are in sin, we should not conclude too quickly that the people about us who have not yet obeyed the gospel are hopeless. The meaning of most of the terms which Paul used to describe their former manner of life is obvious. When he said that they were "hateful, hating one another," he meant that they provoked the hatred of others by their detestable conduct, and in turn hated the ones in whom they had stirred up the hatred.

What the Kindness of God Does for Sinners (Tit. 3: 4-7)

But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man appeared. Paul is here continuing to show the reason why redeemed children of God should not exalt themselves and look down on others. The salvation which they enjoy is not due to any merit of their own, but rather to the kindness and love of God. The word "kindness" is used in the sense of goodness: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2: 4.) The word "love" is literally "love for mankind." The term "philanthropy" comes from this original. Our salvation is due to the kindness or goodness of God, which was born of his love for the fallen race. The kindness and love of God, or the plan for saving the lost, *appeared*, this is, was manifested or displayed in the coming of Christ and the perfecting of the gospel. (Tit. 2: 11.)

Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves. The place which "works" have in the New Testament plan of salvation has long been a subject of discussion among religious people. However, if one will consider the usual viewpoints which have characterized the discussion in the light of the inspired record, he will soon see that one of the principal causes of disagreement on the subject is a failure to recognize the fact that the term "works"

is used in two senses by New Testament writers.

Many people seem to think that works in connection with salvation will automatically rule out salvation by faith. But it is doubtful if there would have been any serious question regarding the place which works have in the plan of salvation, had it not been for the inexcusable action of Martin Luther in inserting the word "only" following the word faith in Rom. 3: 28. The idea which he thereby introduced into religious thinking affected the whole complex of the question now before us; for it forced a contradiction between Rom.

3 and James 2, and left the impression that the Scriptures, without Luther's idea, do not teach justification by faith, which, of course, is not true. See Rom. 5: 1.

But according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. When Paul said, "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves," he meant exactly what he stated in Eph. 2: 8, 9, where he said, "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory." Our salvation is the gift of God—"according to," that is, because of or as a result of "his mercy." Salvation was provided or made possible through "the grace" (as stated in the original) on God's part, and was received or appropriated by faith on our part.

"Not of works" (Eph. 2: 9) is equivalent to "not of yourselves" (Eph. 2: 8) and "not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves" (Tit. 3: 5). There was nothing which we did, or could do, that made our salvation possible. We only accepted by faith that which was provided or made possible for us through God's grace and mercy. "Works" in this sense, then, clearly means "meritorious works," or works which, in and of themselves, procured the desired end, that is, our salvation. If that had happened, then there would have been grounds for glorying or boasting on our part; but, according to Paul, it did not happen, "that no man should glory." (Eph. 2: 9.)

There is therefore a vast difference between "meritorious works" and

obedience which springs from faith. Neither Paul, nor any other New Testament writer, ever placed "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26) in contrast with or in opposition to "faith," nor is such obedience ever represented as making faith void, as meritorious works would have done. See Rom. 4: 14.

"The washing of regeneration," or the *laver* of regeneration, as given in the margin, is, according to Arndt and Gingrich, "the bath that brings about regeneration." It means the same thing that Jesus meant by the new birth (John 3: 5) and what Peter meant when he said, "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 3: 21.)

Vincent says, "The phrase *laver of regeneration* distinctly refers to baptism, in connection with which and through which as a medium regeneration is conceived as taking place. (Rom. 6: 3-5.) It is true that nothing is said of *faith*: but baptism implies faith on the part of its recipient. It has no regenerating effect apart from faith; and the renewing of the Holy Spirit is not bestowed if faith be wanting." (Acts 2: 38, 39.)

The "renewing of the Holy Spirit" follows our conversion to Christ. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature [there is a *new* creation, margin]: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." (2 Cor. 5: 17.) "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4: 16.) "And have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him." (Col. 3:10; Rom. 12: 2; 6: 4.)

This renewing begins when one becomes a Christian, and it is continued "day by day" as one faithfully lives the Christian life. Paul says in the passage now before us that the renewing is done by the Holy Spirit—"effected by the Holy Spirit, Tit. 3: 5." (Thayer, p. 38.) The present passive participle in Col. 3: 10 indicates a continuous refreshing of the new man in Christ Jesus, or, as the present indicative passive of 2 Cor. 4: 16

declares, "our inward man is renewed day by day."

Which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. The Holy Spirit was promised to all obedient believers (John 7: 37-39; Acts 2: 38, 39; 5: 32), and the statement of the text simply affirms a fulfillment of that promise. The expression "poured out" is used in a figurative sense (the Holy Spirit himself being a person), and is found in its original form in Acts 2: 17, 18, 33; Tit. 3: 6. It literally means that the Holy Spirit is given to Christians according to the promise of the gospel. "That upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" [the faith, that is, the gospel, in the original]. (Gal. 3: 14; Acts 2: 38, 39.)

That, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The word "justified" is used in the sense of having been acquitted and declared righteous or acceptable to God. Paul calls it "imputed" righteousness in Romans, that is, righteousness which has been "ascribed" to the obedient

believer in Christ. (Rom. 4). Thus, having begun this life in Christ, we are "heirs according to the hope of eternal life," that is, we hope to continue to live in eternity. "And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3: 3.)

The End in View (Titus 3: 8)

Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I desire that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men: This shows the object Paul had in mind when he wrote this letter to Titus, and especially the immediate context, verses 1-7. Believers are expected to "work" in God's vineyard, and the things which Paul has discussed in this letter will give Christian people an idea of that which the Lord expects them to do. "These things are good and profitable unto men." Titus was to have no hesitation in teaching these things. He must speak out and insist on these necessary duties.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

Why are some people more concerned with some subjects than with others?
What is the meaning and use of the term "regeneration"?
Why is it always important to determine the meaning of words in the study of the Bible?

The Golden Text

What is meant by the grace of God?
In what sense did it appear?
How did the grace of God bring salvation to all men?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Christian Attitude toward Unbelievers

Give an outline of the contents of Tit. 2: 1-3: 8.
Why is it important that Christians manifest the proper attitude toward those who are out of Christ?
What did Paul mean by saying, "Put them in mind"?
Who were the rulers and authorities?
Does this same lesson apply to Christians today? Give reasons for your answer.
Concerning whom were they not to speak evil? Why?
What does it mean for one to be contentious? Gentle?

How may Christians show meekness toward all men?

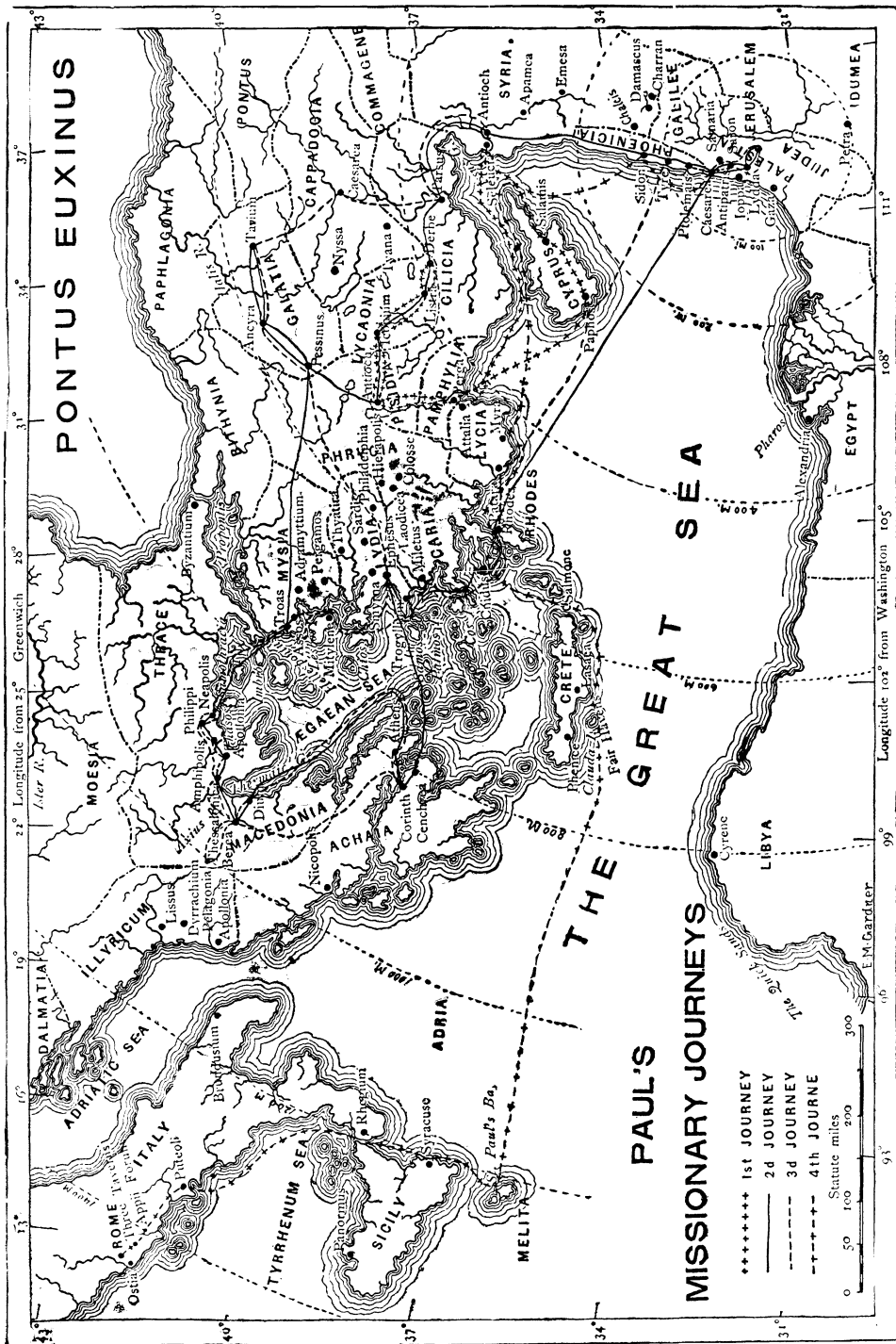
What was Paul's object in saying, "For we also once were foolish," etc.?
Discuss the characteristics of the "foolish."

What the Kindness of God Does for Sinners

What is meant by the kindness and love of God?
Why did Paul introduce this?
What "works done in righteousness" did the apostle refer to?
Why is there so much discussion regarding works in regard to salvation?
How did God save us?
What is meant by the washing of regeneration?
In what way are Christians renewed by the Holy Spirit?
What is meant by saying that the Holy Spirit is poured out upon us?
How do people today receive the Holy Spirit?
What promise was made regarding the giving of the Spirit?
What is meant by being justified by his grace?
What is the hope of eternal life?

The End in View

What was Paul's object in writing to Titus?
What good works must be maintained?
What is meant by "affirm confidently"?



THIRD QUARTER

HEBREWS, A CONTRAST OF THE OLD ORDER
WITH THE NEW COVENANT*Aim: To learn more fully the "better way" of the New Covenant.*

Lesson I—July 6, 1958

GOD SPEAKS BY HIS SON

Lesson Text

Heb. 1: 1-9

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners,

2 Hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his* Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time,
Thou art my Son.

This day have I begotten thee?
and again,

I will be to him a Father,
And he shall be to me a son?

6 And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, And his ministers a flame of fire:

8 But of the Son *he saith*,
Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever;

And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;

Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee

With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Golden Text.—*"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"* (Matt. 17: 5b.)

Devotional Reading.—Heb. 1: 10-14.

Daily Bible Readings

June 30. M..... Jesus, the True Vine (John 15: 1-10)

July 1. T..... Jesus Speaks of the Fathers (John 8: 26-54)

July 2. W..... In the Beginning the Word (John 1: 1-18)

July 3. T. Jesus Came Down from Heaven (John 6: 38-69)

July 4. F. Honor the Son, Honor the Father (John 5: 19-37)

July 5. S..... Jesus Did the Will of the Father (John 7: 16-29)

July 6. S..... Confess the Son and the Father (1 John 2: 22-24)

Time.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

Place.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

Persons.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The Book of Hebrews occupies a unique place in the Bible. There is no other book quite like it in the design for which it was written. Galatians and Romans, both written

on the same general subject, come nearer to being like Hebrews than any other book of the New Testament, but their purpose was somewhat different from the purpose of Hebrews.

Galatians and Romans show the difference between the old covenant and the new; but it remained for Hebrews to demonstrate the actual transition.

The people to whom Paul wrote (it is assumed here that Paul was the writer) had all been trained under the laws and institutions of Moses; and their minds had been thoroughly molded in the form of teaching which the great law-giver had delivered unto them. Furthermore, all of their early impressions and religious habits had the effect of inclining them toward the imposing rites and ceremonies of the law. And to those educational predilections in favor of Judaism, there were added other forces which were influencing them away from Christ, such as discouragement and discontent which resulted from their many trials and persecutions.

In writing this epistle, Paul clearly demonstrated the infinite superiority of Christianity over Judaism; and he showed beyond the shadow of a doubt that the plan of

salvation revealed in the gospel is the only plan by which any sinner can be saved. His aim in writing therefore was to make known the true significance of Christ and his work, and in so doing to remove from the minds of his readers the suspicion which had haunted their thinking, embarrassed their faith, lessened their enjoyment, and lowered their vitality.

But the epistle was not designed alone for the instruction of these Hebrew Christians; there was a secondary purpose — namely, the Holy Spirit chose the occasion to make a record which would enlighten the Lord's people in all ages to follow, concerning the design of the ancient covenant, and the interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures. And, as pointed out by Conybeare and Howson, there is no nobler monument in which the memory of Paul could have been enshrined, or his mission on earth more fitly closed, than by this inspired record of the true subordination of Judaism to Christianity.

The Golden Text

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. It is well for all who study these lessons to keep before them the purpose of a golden text; and inasmuch as this is the first lesson of a new quarter, it is probably a good time to have our attention called to that purpose. A golden text is supposed to embody, in a few words, the principal thought of the entire lesson. That is the reason why the golden text is important. If the golden text is properly understood, it will be much easier for one to understand the main body of the lesson. Teachers therefore should give considerable time to a discussion of the golden text each week.

The principal thought of this lesson, as indeed it is of the entire quarter, is a contrast between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, and the golden text is taken from an incident in the life of Jesus which forcefully illustrates that contrast. That incident is known to us as the transfiguration. In this glorious scene, we see not only Jesus, but also the author and restorer of the old

dispensation; and they are all talking, not as opponents, but as friends interested in a common subject, namely, the death of Jesus. (Luke 9: 30, 31.) This was the death which would bring to an end the law of Moses. (Col. 2: 14.)

The golden text today formed the climax of the scene of the transfiguration. The former covenant had pointed to the new one, and had by means of types and shadows foretold every vital feature of it. The enemies of Jesus had charged that he was entirely out of harmony with the will of God, as revealed in the law of Moses; but now, as already noted, the three principal actors of the two covenants, have been brought together in a glorious scene and the voice of God himself makes known the fact that from that time forward Jesus, and not Moses or Elijah, is to be heard. The two ancient worthies of the former order laid down, as it were, their commission at the feet of him to whom, as the prophet who was to come, all must hearken. (Deut. 18: 15-19; Acts 3: 22, 23.)

The Text Explained

The Relative Rank and Personal Majesty of the Son of God

(Heb. 1: 1-4)

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners.

The manner in which this epistle begins is most unusual. Without any preliminaries whatsoever, the writer makes his first great affirmation, namely, that God had previously spoken. Hebrews, like Genesis and John, begins with God. It is well to keep in mind that during the first twenty-five hundred years of the world's history, Jehovah did not give a code of laws for all his people, but dealt with the head of each family or tribe separately. The first great system of laws for all of the people who were in covenant relationship with him was that which was spoken through Moses.

The speaking which was referred to in the verse now before us was by the prophets who lived and worked under the Mosaic regime. The prophets were the inspired teachers whom God sent to teach the people his will, and to warn them of the evils which would result from the violation of his laws. A prophet, strictly speaking, was one who spoke for another. God's prophets, therefore, were those who spoke for him. Sometimes prophets foretold the future, and sometimes they made known Jehovah's will for the present.

When Jehovah spoke through the prophets during the dispensation of Moses, the speaking was "by divers portions and in divers manners." This implies that the revelation was progressive, according to the needs of the people and their ability to understand and apply it. Isaiah illustrated this principle by the common method of teaching children: "Whom will we teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts? For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little." (Isa. 28: 9, 10.)

The variety of the revelation during the former dispensation included both the substance of the message and

the manner of its delivery. That which was said related to the then present, as well as to the future; and various methods of teaching were employed, such as types, shadows, and plain speech. The whole process has been compared to a great drama which was divided into separate acts. In each act Jehovah employed different methods of bringing home to his people the various aspects of the truth.

Hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son. "The end of these days" probably has reference to the end of the Jewish dispensation, (The ministry of Christ was during the last days of the Jewish age), but the speaking "unto us in his Son" refers to the present dispensation. Christ does not continue to speak throughout the entire period, but, instead, his message was completed during the time of the Apostles through whom it was to be made known. It was therefore at the end of the Mosaic dispensation, as well as at the beginning of the Christian dispensation, that God's final message to the human race was delivered.

Thus, at the very beginning of the epistle, the inspired writer sets forth the bold contrast between the preparatory revelation under the previous dispensation and the finality of the absolute revelation in Christ. His purpose was to prove that the old covenant through which Jehovah dealt with the Hebrew race has been superseded by the new order under Christ. The place which the Epistle to the Hebrews occupies in the literature of the Bible is comparable to the place which the transfiguration occupies in the life of Christ. Former mediators retire, and Christ alone is left under the voice of him who said, "Hear ye him."

Whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds. Just when Jesus was appointed heir of all things has been and still is a matter of controversy among Bible students. Ephesians 3: 11 ("according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord") indicates the origin of the appointment. Heirship is linked with sonship. (Rom. 8: 17; Gal. 4: 7.) Christ claimed to be the Son of

God while here upon the earth, but it was not until after his resurrection from the dead that the crowning proof of that fact became an absolute reality. (Rom. 1: 3, 4.)

It seems probable that Christ did not actually become heir of all things until after his resurrection from the dead. This, of course, necessarily involved his incarnation. The following quotation from Vincent seems apropos just here: "Christ attained the messianic lordship through incarnation. Something was *acquired* as the result of his incarnation which he did not possess before it, and could not have possessed without it. Equality with God was his birth-right; but out of his human life, death, and resurrection came a type of sovereignty which could pertain to him only through his triumph over human sin in the flesh (Verse 3), through his identification with men as their brother. Messianic lordship could not pertain to his preincarnate state: it is a matter of function, not of inherent power and majesty. He was *essentially* Son of God; he must become Son of man."

Not only was Christ appointed heir of all things; it was also through him that the worlds were made. (John 1: 3; Col. 1: 16, 17.) The emphasis is on *made*, rather than on *worlds*; on the fact of creation, rather than on that which was created. But why mention creation at this time? The idea seems to be that heirship goes with creation—that Christ is heir of that which he made, and because he made it.

Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance. Christ's absolute being is here exhibited in two aspects—viz:

(1) The effulgence of God's glory, and (2) the very image of his substance. The word "effulgence," according to Greek scholars, seems to carry with it the idea of divine radiance, or reflected brightness. Jesus is that radiance or reflected brightness, and no one can see the Father except through him. (John 14: 9.) The word "glory" refers to the divine attributes collectively, or, which is the same thing, the fulness of the Godhead—the full measure of deity. (Col. 2: 9.) Jesus is the sole expression of this divine glory. The second characteristic of Christ which

is exhibited here—"the very image of his substance"—means practically the same thing. The grammatical construction being a kind of Hebrew parallelism, the idea seems to be that the Son bears the exact impress of the divine nature and character of God.

And upholding all things by the word of his power. By the word "upholding" Paul appears to mean that Christ, not only sustains the universe, but also maintains its coherence and directs its development. (Col. 1: 17.) This can only mean that in Jesus God is with us.

When he made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. In addition to revealing God to the human race and sustaining and directing the universe, Jesus also had confronted and dealt with the fact of sin, which had drawn the world away from God and thrown it into disorder. The law of Moses had been powerless to forgive sin (Acts 13: 39), but it has been accomplished through Christ; and he has taken his seat at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

Having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. Inasmuch as the angels were the highest beings next to God, which were known to the Jews, the purpose here is to show the greatness of Jesus. The angels were messengers, but Jesus is God's Son, and his name therefore is greater than theirs. (Phil. 2: 5-11.) God always gives a name in harmony with the rank and character of the person designated by it; and since Christ in his humiliation undertook the greatest work in the universe, he has, accordingly, the greatest name, under God, which is possible for any one to have. This shows that Christ in his new relationship is far superior to the angels who, in the estimation of the Hebrew readers, stood next to God.

Scriptural Proof of Christ's Superiority to Angels (Heb. 1: 5-8)

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee? Paul now resorts to the Scriptures to prove that Jesus is superior to angels. No such language as that quoted was

ever addressed to angels, as it was to Christ. "This day have I begotten thee" refers to the Lord's resurrection. (Acts 13: 32-37; Rev. 1: 5.) See Psalm 2 for the original quotation—one of the Messianic psalms.

And again, I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son? This quotation is from 2 Sam. 7: 14, and it should be read in the light of the full context. (2 Sam. 7: 12-16.) The original application was to Solomon, but Paul makes it apply to Christ too, probably because much of the Old Testament had a double meaning.

And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. This quotation is from the Septuagint Version of Deut. 32: 43, the version used by Christ and the apostles. After having shown that the term "Son" was reserved for Christ, and was not given to any angel, the writer advances another step and adduces a scripture which shows that the relation of the angels to the Messiah was one of worship.

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, And his ministers a flame of fire. This quotation is from Psalm 104: 4 and is another instance of Hebrew parallelism, that is, saying substantially the same thing in the two parts of the statement. This shows that the angels are merely servants, and is used in

contrast with the attributes which are ascribed to the Son.

But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. In contrast with what the Scriptures have said of the angels, Jesus is here addressed as God (John 1: 1), and is pictured as a reigning king, whose sceptre is always one of uprightness. Not only does this show Jesus to be above the angels in station, dignity, and honor; but is also a direct declaration of his deity or divinity. This quotation is from Psalm 45: 6.

The Reward of Righteousness (Heb. 1: 9)

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee With the oil of gladness above thy fellows. This is from Psalm 45: 7. In consequence of the exalted rank of Christ, his immaculate holiness, and the righteous character of his administration, God himself anointed him with the oil of gladness above all of his associates. The context would suggest that his "fellows" were angels, but in view of the fact that Christ is here described as a king, the reference may be to fellow kings. If so, then the contrast is this: They were anointed simply as kings, while he was anointed as prophet, priest, and king, and is "the ruler of the kings of the earth." (Rev. 1: 5.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the general subject for this quarter?

What is the aim of these lessons?

What is the subject of today's lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What can you say of the nature of the Book of Hebrews?

In what ways is it like, and unlike, other New Testament books, especially Galatians and Romans?

To whom was Hebrews probably written? and by whom?

What was his purpose in writing?

Why would his readers need such instruction?

What broader use has the book been put to by the Holy Spirit?

The Golden Text

Why is a golden text usually included in a lesson?

In what way may a golden text contribute to the understanding of the lesson as a whole?

Give the setting of today's golden text.

What is the principal lesson taught by it?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Relative Rank and Personal Majesty of the Son of God

Discuss the unusual way in which the epistle begins.

What was the writer's first great affirmation?

Who were the prophets and the fathers to whom they spoke?

What is meant by "divers portions and in divers manners"?

At the end of what days did Jehovah speak through his Son?

What was Paul's purpose in presenting the contrast of verses 1 and 2?

When was Jesus appointed heir of all things? Give reasons for your answer.

Why say, "through whom he also made the worlds"?

What is meant by "the effulgence of his glory"?

How is Christ the very image of God's substance?

What is implied in "upholding all things by the word of his power"?

What is the force of "made purification of sins"?

What is signified by sitting at the right hand of God?
How did Christ inherit a better name than the angels?

Scriptural Proof of Christ's
Superiority to Angels

How did the first passage Paul quoted show that Christ is greater than the angels?

On what day did God beget Christ?

How was the passage which originally applied to Solomon also applied to Christ?

What was proved by the fact that angels worshiped Jesus?

What is the mission of angels?

In what sense is Christ God? Give reasons for your answer.

The Reward of Righteousness

Why and by whom was Christ anointed with the oil of gladness?

Who were his "fellows"?

Why was it necessary for Paul to prove the greatness of Jesus?

In what way is Christ greater than the kings of the earth?

What would his superiority to the angels prove to the Hebrew readers?

Lesson II—July 13, 1958

THE GREAT SALVATION

Lesson Text

Heb. 2: 1-10

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard;

4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.

5 For not unto angels did he subject the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one hath somewhere testified, saying,

What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

Or the son of man, that thou

visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels;

Thou crownedst him with glory and honor,

And didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet.

For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to him.

9 But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, *even* Je'-sus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Golden Text.—"And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 2: 11-18.

Daily Bible Readings

July 7. M. Cost of Salvation (John 3: 14-18)
July 8. T. Power of God Unto Salvation (Rom. 1: 8-16)
July 9. W. The New Birth (John 3: 1-10)
July 10. T. Sacrifices (Luke 14: 26-40)
July 11. F. May Fail of Salvation (Heb. 4: 1-10)
July 12. S. An Example of Salvation (Acts 8: 26-40)
July 13. S. Conditions of Salvation (Heb. 11: 6; Luke 13: 3; Rom. 10: 10;

Acts 2: 38)

Time.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

Place.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

Persons.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

It would be difficult for us to find a subject which should be of greater concern to us than the one now before us. Salvation, in its widest sense, includes the cleansing of our consciences from all past guilt, and the delivery of our souls from all those inclinations to evil which now so strongly predominate within us. "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. 7: 24.) The overall idea of salvation is the total restoration of man from his fallen state.

It seems that to some people salvation means no more than deliverance from hell and admittance into heaven. It would be nearer the truth if we

thought of those two things as the *results* of salvation. We have been redeemed, from hell because we are saved, and when we enter into heaven it will be because we were saved beforehand. Our eternal salvation will be the result of our having been saved in this life.

To use a well known Bible metaphor, salvation begins with us as wandering sheep; it pulls us upon the shoulders of the Good Shepherd who carries us into the fold, where we are disciplined and cared for through life; and then finally, if we are faithful to the end, we are brought into the green pastures of heaven and beside the still waters of eternal joy.

The Golden Text

And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. This text involves the virgin birth of Jesus, a fact or truth which is accepted by faith on the part of all who believe the Bible. If God was not able to make the virgin birth possible, then he was not able to forgive the sins of anyone; for forgiveness implies that the guilt of sin has been completely removed and abolished. It requires no greater power to make the virgin birth possible, than it does to forgive sins, that is, in the sense in which God forgives sins. The forgiven person becomes a new creation in Christ. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature [there is a new creation, margin]: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." (2 Cor. 5: 17.)

The name "Jesus" means Saviour or Jehovah saves. It was a name worn by many Hebrews during Bible times, and is found applied to others in the New Testament. (Acts 13: 6; Col. 4: 11.) Joshua and Jesus have the same meaning. (See Heb. 4:

8.) But since the name was given to the Son of Mary it is not usually associated with ordinary men by those who read and respect the New Testament. The name has acquired a new significance in its association with our Lord, and informed people do not feel at liberty to appropriate the name either to themselves or their children as a personal appellation.

Sin is a condition in human experience which can be dealt with adequately only by Deity. There are three aspects of the malady which should be considered in discussing this phase of the golden text—viz., the fact of sin; the moral and spiritual nature of sin; and the habit of sin. An act, of course, cannot be undone, but Jesus has made it possible for the guilt which resulted from the act to be forgiven. The moral and spiritual status of the sinner is changed by the removal of the conditions which alienated the sinner from God (2 Cor. 5: 17-21); and the habit of sin is broken in the lives of people by their close fellowship with the Lord. (1 John 1: 6, 7.)

The Text Explained

The Danger of Neglect (Heb. 2: 1-4)

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard. After saying that God has spoken to us through his Son, the writer spent the remainder of chapter 1 showing the exalted station

of Christ. The probable reason for comparing him to angels first was due to the fact that they, in the estimation of the Jews, stood next to God in greatness and power. If the Son therefore is greater than they, then there is every reason to listen to that which he says.

The term "therefore" should be emphasized, for it connects the conclusion and warning in the first part of chapter 2 with that which was said in chapter 1. Christ has been so signally honored by God that any message which is spoken through him deserves the highest possible attention which can be given to it. *The things that were heard* include all the facts, commands, promises, and threats which are contained in the gospel.

Lest haply we drift away from them. The idea here is in sharp contrast with earnest heed. A lapse in Christianity is more often the result of inattention than of design. The figure used here seems to be that of people who have heard the Lord's message as being on a stream, the natural tendency of which is to carry them downward to ruin. It does not require any effort for one to be lost. He can fold his arms and give way to the natural current; and it will not be long until he will be beyond the hope of redemption. But on the other hand, if he wants to be saved, he must make diligent use of the means which have been provided for his salvation, the means contained in "the things that were heard."

For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward. This is the inspired reason for the admonition in the preceding verse. The word spoken through angels was the law of Moses. (Deut. 33: 2; Acts 7: 53; Gal. 3: 19.) Moses was the mediator between God and the children of Israel, but angels were used of God in giving the law to him. If the law which was given through the agency of angels remained stedfast in every respect, what must be expected of the superior law which was spoken through God's Son?

The word "stedfast" means inviolable, being securely founded in the divine holiness and eternal in its principles and obligations. Not a single departure from the law spoken through angels was passed by unnoticed; penalties were visited upon all who in any way violated it. "Transgression" was a stepping over, that is, a positive violation of the divine law, while "disobedience" was a refusal to hear and an unwilling-

ness to obey; it was "dis"—obedience, a negative violation. Thus, in the two words we have the idea of sins of commission and sins of omission, or the two categories which cover all sins. Every sin received its just recompense of reward, or was properly dealt with.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? The term "we" is emphatic. If those who violated in any manner the law which was spoken through angels were punished, how shall we who have the words of the Son of God himself escape if we disregard them? The idea contained in the word "neglect" is forcefully illustrated in Matt. 22:1, where the same original is rendered "made light of it," that is, they paid no attention to it. The passage reads, "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise." Head Matt. 22: 1-4. The salvation in question is great, because it is the salvation which is offered through Christ.

Which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard. This passage and the one contained in the following verse enable us to identify the salvation in question. (1) It was first spoken through the Lord; (2) was confirmed by them who heard him speak; and (3) it was attested by God through miraculous gifts. No one can be sure of this salvation until he finds all three of these marks of identification. All of the marks in question are found in Mark 16:14-20.

"And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name they shall cast out demons: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*"

"So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen"

The statement, "And these signs shall accompany them that believe," does not say nor imply that every individual would be able to perform miraculous deeds, but rather, that there would be certain ones who could do so in all areas where the gospel was preached during the age of miracles. This idea is further confirmed in the following verse.

God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will. The original preachers of the word were not left to their unaided memory, knowledge, and power in making known the will of God. The Holy Spirit was sent to direct and guide them, and to enable them to make known the terms of salvation with infallible certainty. God himself bore witness to their preaching by miraculous powers. Signs were miracles or other facts which proved their divine mission; "wonders" were miracles which were calculated to arrest attention; manifold, that is, various kinds of powers, were miracles which demonstrated the presence of superhuman power; while gifts of the Holy Spirit were the miraculous powers which were distributed (see marginal reading) to various ones for the purpose of confirming the word. The same general idea is found in 1 Cor. 12: 4-11. See also Eph. 4: 8-16.

Man's Dominion over the World to Be Accomplished through Christ (Heb. 2: 5-9)

For not unto angels did he subject the world to come, whereof we speak. Having emphasized the permanence and sovereignty of the Son by contrasting him with the angels, and having paused, as it were, to give a much needed warning and exhortation Paul now proceeds to bring the supremacy of the Son into direct relation to the Messianic, administration of "the world to come"; and to explain why it was necessary that the Lord should for a time appear in a

form "a little lower than the angels." And then, as if in answer to an anticipated question, the apostle gives the divine reason for this temporary inglorious position of the Son of God, namely, it was God's purpose to save human beings, not angels; and since there is only one path by which men can attain to glory, that is by suffering, it was becoming in their leader to travel the pathway first.

Any path which the Saviour travels to glory must be one in which men can follow him; and inasmuch as it was from human levels and as a man that he was to win his glory (Phil. 2: 5-11), there was no other course for him to follow. His sufferings, as we shall see further on in these studies, accomplished two things: (1) they produced in Jesus the sympathy which qualifies him as High Priest (Heb. 4: 14-16; 5: 7-10); and (2) his death broke the power which had enslaved the human race in a constant bondage of fear (Heb. 2: 14-18).

"The world to come," as indicated by the marginal note, probably refers to the Messianic reign of the Son of God. If this view is true, then Paul was probably looking forward to that glorious state of the redeemed, of which the present mediatorial reign of Christ is an integral part. This was made possible by the death of Jesus and the angels have never been put in charge of this phase of God's work. The way to glory was spoken by the Lord, and "the inhabited earth" is the scene of his present kingdom.

But one hath somewhere testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? This quotation is from Psalm 8, and the reference is to mankind, not to Jesus. The indefinite manner in which the quotation is made was not due to any doubt regarding the authorship of the psalm, or to the fact that the writer was quoting from memory; instead, it seems to have been a rhetorical method of suggesting that his readers were well acquainted with the passage, a passage which tells of God's attitude toward and care for the human race. Read the entire psalm.

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, And didst set him over the works of thy hands;

God's mindfulness of man and that which he has done for him is illustrated by three particulars: (1) thou madest him a little lower than the angels—his rank or position among the created things; (2) thou crownedst him with glory and honor—the royal dignity which man enjoys, especially that part of the race which is loyal to God's purpose; and (3) and didst set him over the works of thy hands—the sphere of his responsibility.

Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet. This clause obviously completes the sentence which begins with verse 7. It is another illustration, not only of Hebrew parallelism, but also of the many incorrect divisions of chapters and verses which have been made by men. The psalmist specifies the animal and bird life, and the fish of the sea, as that which was subjected to man; but it appears from the use that Paul makes of it that "all" is extended to include the subduing of everything pertaining to the earth.

For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to him. This implies that the first two items in man's supremacy have been realized; and, as the full context shows, the third is guaranteed in Christ. The apostle's argument seems to require an absolutely universal subjection, so that everything which stands in the way of man's glory may be subdued. This appears obvious in the light of the achievements of Christ.

But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering

of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man. The grammatical construction of this sentence has been and is a subject of debate among Bible students. Milligan offers this solution which appears very reasonable: "But we see Jesus (who was made a little lower than the angels, so that he might by the grace of God taste death for every man) crowned with glory and honor, on account of the suffering of death." Jesus therefore is the solution of the problem, since it is through him that all things will finally be subjected.

Why Jesus Suffered As He Did (Heb. 2: 10)

For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. The average Jew regarded the humiliation and suffering of Jesus as being wholly inconsistent with the predictions regarding the coming Messiah; and it was for the purpose of explaining this matter that the statement of the text was introduced. The author of our salvation, in the final analysis, is God (2 Cor. 5: 18); and inasmuch as the entire universe has him for its cause and explanation, Paul wanted his readers to understand that there was a basic reason for the sufferings of Christ. Later on the apostle will say, "Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 8, 9.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text, and show its appropriateness.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Why should every responsible person be interested in this lesson?

What is involved in the term "salvation"?

What is the relation of our salvation to heaven and hell?

Give a summary of the process of salvation.

The Golden Text

Why is the virgin birth of Jesus a necessary element of our faith?

Why do so many people object to this idea? Give reasons for your answer.

In what sense does God forgive sins?

How is it that one so forgiven is a new

creature in Christ Jesus?

What is implied in the marginal reading of 2 Cor. 5: 17?

What is the meaning of the name "Jesus"?

How may sin be described in relation to human experience?

What are the three basic aspects of sin? and how does the Lord deal with each one of them?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Danger of Neglect

What is the force of the term "therefore" in verse 12?

Why should we give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard?

What were the things that were heard?

How may one drift away from them?

How is a lapse in Christianity usually brought about?

What was the word spoken through angels? and how was it regarded by God?
 What is the point of contrast between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, so far as obedience is concerned?
 What is the meaning of "transgression" and "disobedience"?
 What does the term "neglect" imply?
 Why is this salvation called great?
 How may this salvation be positively identified by people today?
 What divine attestation did the great salvation receive?

Man's Dominion Over the World to Be Accomplished through Christ

Why the contrast of Christ with angels at this point?
 What is meant by "the world to come"?
 What was the purpose of the quotation from Psalm 8 regarding man?

Why didn't Paul cite the specific source of his quotation?
 What did God's mindfulness of man include?
 How much of that has already been accomplished?
 In what way will the rest be brought about?
 Taking an over-all view of Paul's argument, why was it necessary for Jesus to be made a little lower than the angels?
 What is the full idea contained in verse 9?
 If Jesus tasted death for every man, will all men be saved? Give reasons for your answer.
 Why was it necessary for the writer of Hebrews to explain the humiliation and suffering of Christ?
 Who is the author of our salvation?
 What was the basis of the reasonableness of Paul's argument here?

Lesson III—July 20, 1958

A WARNING OF APOSTASY

Lesson Text

Heb. 3: 7-17

7 Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith,
 To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,
 Like as in the day of the trial in the wilderness,
 9 Where your fathers tried me by proving me,
 And saw my works forty years.
 10 Wherefore I was displeased with this generation,
 And said, They do always err in their heart:
 But they did not know my ways;
 11 As I swear in my wrath,
 They shall not enter into my rest
 12 Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you n

evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God:

13 But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin:

14 For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end:

15 While it is said,
 To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of E'-gypt by Mo'-ses?

17 And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

Golden Text.—*"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* (1 Cor. 10: 12.)

Devotional Reading.—Heb. 3: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

July 14.	M.....	Examples Written for Us (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)
July 15.	T.....	Punishment for Apostates (Zeph. 1: 1-6)
July 16.	W.....	Description of Apostates (2 Pet. 2: 1-22)
July 17.	T.....	A Cause of Apostasy (Matt. 24: 1-12)
July 18.	F.....	False Teachers (1 Tim. 4: 1-7)
July 19.	S.....	Description of Evil Days (2 Tim. 3: 1-9)
July 20.	S.....	Angels Fell (Jude 4-6)

Time.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

Place.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

Persons.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

One of the noticeable facts regarding the revelation of the New Testament is the frequent reference to the possibility of apostasy. In fact, it is often the case that the departure from the Lord and his way of life is actually predicted. "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." (1 Tim. 4: 1.) "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20: 29, 30.)

The struggle between right and wrong has been continuous since the garden of Eden, and the Scriptures specifically teach that it will continue until the end of time. Almost the final thing said in the Book of Revelation is this: "I testify unto every man

that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." (Rev. 22: 18, 19.)

It is remarkably strange, in the light of the indisputable facts of inspiration, that any responsible person would contend that it is impossible for children of God to apostatize, so as to be finally lost. It is, of course, due to unbelief in the Scriptures, as may be seen by considering the facts of our lesson today. The truth of the matter is that the entire Book of Hebrews was written to warn Jewish Christians of the dangers of apostasy; and the writer shows in 6: 4-6 that it is impossible to renew some again unto repentance.

The Golden Text

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Any thoughtful observer has no difficulty in seeing the conditions portrayed by Paul among the Lord's people today. Indifference, moral and spiritual laxity, and general unfaithfulness are prevalent to an alarming degree. The golden text has its setting amid such conditions; and we can do no better at this time than to quote the entire context.

"For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Now these things happened unto them by the way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 1-13.)

The apostle, in this passage, shows in detail how apostasy works, and he says that these things were written for our admonition. The question therefore is, Are we wise enough to heed the warning? Verse 13 shows that God does not want any of his children to be lost, and that his faithfulness will always provide the way of escape for those who really want to live with him. Thus, along with the warning of the danger of falling away, we have the blessed assurance that we need not succumb to the tempter.

The Text Explained

Warning Against Unbelief (Heb. 3: 7-11)

Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, To-day if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, Like as in the day of the trial in the wilderness. After having discussed the superiority of Christ to angels, in the first two chapters of Hebrews, Paul moves on in chapters 3 and 4 to contrast Christ with Moses and Joshua. The lesson before us today is concerned with the superiority of Christ to Moses and the fate of the Israelites under the latter. Before beginning the discussion of the lesson proper, it is well to get a clear view of the preceding verses of Chapter 3. Jesus is called the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, and as such, he is shown to be superior to Moses. Moses is called a servant, while Jesus is referred to as a Son; and in a similar manner, the people of the Old Testament period are called God's house, in which Moses served, while the people of the new covenant are the house of God, in which Christ as God's Son serves as the leader.

The quotation which Paul makes is from Psalm 95, and it should be read by those who are studying this lesson. It should be observed that the psalm is declared to be the words of the Holy Spirit himself, that "is to say that the psalmist himself was inspired when he composed the poem. The purpose of the original statement, as well as the use Paul made of it, was a warning against unbelief.

The ninety-fifth Psalm begins with a call for the people to come before God and praise him, with a reminder that he is the sovereign ruler of all things. In the Hebrew passage Paul shows that God's house is composed of his people and that they must praise and serve him there, that is, in the church. God's call to his people has always been clear and distinct, in any age of the world. They have never been left in doubt about their duty and privileges.

But the Holy Spirit warns that people must respond to the call to duty, or the hearts will become hardened. Paul does not go into detail regarding the specific instances of Israel's disobedience, but simply speaks of

the "provocation" and "the day of the trial in the wilderness." The psalmist cited the example of "Meribah" and "Massah." (Ex. 17: 1-7; Num. 20: 13; Deut. 6: 16.)

The hardening of the human heart is a terrible thing to contemplate, but it is a condition which is certain to come to those who turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit. God has decreed that the preaching of his word is going to have a definite effect in the lives and upon the hearts of those who hear it. (Isa. 55: 10, 11; 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16.) The word of God is going to do one of two things: It will soften and make better those who hear it, or it will harden and make them worse. A ball of mud and a ball of wax may be laid side by side in the sunshine on a hot summer day, and all that one needs to do in order to observe how the principle now under consideration works is to watch the results. The mud will become hard, while the wax will melt. In a similar manner, the condition of the heart will determine the effect the gospel will have upon it.

Where your fathers tried me by proving me, And saw my works forty years. It is interesting to observe the number of times a summary of God's dealings with Israel in the wilderness is found in the New Testament. (Acts 7: 13; 1 Cor. 10.) The prophets of the Old Testament also used these historical records in their preaching. Paul specifically states in 1 Cor. 10 and in Rom. 15: 4 that they were recorded for our example and admonition. Bible students today therefore should familiarize themselves with these Old Testament records. The forty years, of course, refers to the period between the departure from Egypt and the entrance into Canaan.

Wherefore I was displeased with this generation, And said, They do always err in their hearts. The word for "displeased" literally means to be indignant, provoked, or disgusted with. The original term is found only twice in the New Testament. (Heb. 3: 10, 17.) The ideas which Jehovah meant to express is about the same, or so it seems, as that expressed by Jesus in his letter to the Laodiceans: "So because thou art

lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3: 16.)

But they did not know my ways; As I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. It has always been difficult for the human race to learn that their ways are not the ways of the Lord. The true significance of this proposition may be learned from Isa. 55: 8, 9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And again, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the way of death." (Prov. 14: 12.)

The ways of Jehovah always lead to that which is best for mankind. When the children of Israel left the bondage of Egypt, had they been willing to follow the Lord's leading, they would have reached the land in a relatively short time; but since they did not endeavor to learn his ways, they were compelled to wander in the wilderness for some thirty-eight additional years, or until all of those who had been unfaithful had died. It appears that they were willing to endure the hardships of Egypt, rather than submit to that divine discipline which was necessary to prepare them for the rest which God had promised them.

The story of Israel's rejection is graphically told in the fourteenth chapter of Numbers. The people had questioned the wisdom of going into Canaan, and had requested that spies be sent in to explore the land and bring back their report before the multitude attempted to enter. Moses was willing to grant that request and the spies were sent (Deut. 1: 19-25); but even that did not cause their murmuring to cease. It was then that Jehovah swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. (Num. 13 and 14; Deut. 1.)

Exhortation to Avoid Such Unbelief (Heb. 3: 12-15)

Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God. There are some vital lessons here for every person who desires to please God and enter

into the final rest which has been ordained for his people. 1. The people to whom the words of the text were addressed were in great danger of falling away from God's favor; and what was true of them may also be true of any other child of God. We know that the Israelites of old did fall away, and Paul exhorts his readers to take heed lest the same fate should befall them. (2 Pet. 2: 20-22.)

2. The second lesson to be learned concerns the reason for their fall—viz., "an evil heart of unbelief." When people begin to distrust the Lord and his way for them, it is then that they start on the way of the evil one. Paul says, "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.) It is not enough to believe that there is a God; those who are pleasing to him must demonstrate their trust or confidence in him.

3. Another lesson to be learned is that any child of God can avoid this tragic departure from the way of righteousness by making use of the means provided for him. If he will do his part, then God will always do the rest. This fact is emphasized over and over in the New Testament. (Rom. 8; 2 Pet. 1: 1-11.) God's word is sufficient to meet the needs of any situation which may arise in the life of a Christian, but each individual must learn to keep his heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. (Prov. 4: 23.)

But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. The New Testament clearly teaches that Christian people have a mutual obligation toward each other. "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6: 1, 2.) It is the duty of each Christian to watch in behalf of, and do all that he can to encourage his fellow disciples to walk in the way of the Lord. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." (Heb. 10: 24.)

The reason assigned for this mutual helpfulness is "lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." The heart becomes hardened when it manifests an antagonism toward the revealed will of the Lord. Sin always deceives the sinner; that is what happened in the garden of Eden. Paul says, "For sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me." (Rom. 7: 11.) Vincent notes that the basic idea which is expressed by "deceitfulness" is a *trick*. "The warning is against being hardened by a trick which their sin may play them." Sin in the heart or life of a person always blinds him to the attractiveness of God's offer, with the result that the sinner does not realize what has happened until it is too late.

For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end. The word "partakers" is used in the sense of fellows, fellowship, or partners. See Luke 5: 7 and Heb. 1: 9 where the same original word is found. But Paul warns that this relationship depends upon our holding "fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." The "beginning of our confidence" is the trust in Christ with which we began our service to him, or with which we began the Christian life. (Rev. 2: 4, 5.)

While it is said, To-day if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. Paul again quotes from the ninety-fifth Psalm in an effort to impress upon his readers the need for steadfastness. God has done and still is graciously doing his part, and it is up to us to see that our hearts are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

A Further Lesson from Jewish History (Heb. 3: 16, 17)

For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? One of the basic principles of learning is frequent repetition, and the lesson before us today is an impressive example of the method by which it may be put into practice. Earlier in the chapter the apostle referred to the conduct of the Israelites in the wilderness, and here he brings the matter to the attention of his readers again. He also quoted more than once from the ninety-fifth Psalm. Teachers therefore should not be afraid to repeat themselves, when by doing so they can impress the lesson upon those who are listening.

We learn from Num. 1: 46 that there were six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty above twenty years of age who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. This did not include the Levites. (Verse 47.) Of that vast number, only Joshua and Caleb were privileged to enter into the land of Canaan. The others died in the wilderness. These facts are used by the Holy Spirit to warn people regarding the possibility of apostasy, and any person today who respects God's word will take heed to himself, lest he fall.

And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? This passage shows the type of people with whom Jehovah is displeased—people who had the opportunity to know his will, but who rebelled against it. (Num. 26: 64, 65.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons, or the setting of the lesson.

Introduction

What is the teaching of the New Testament regarding the possibility of apostasy?

Why is this true?

Why do some people teach the impossibility of apostasy?

What is the basic idea throughout the book of Hebrews?

The Golden Text

What are some of the symptoms in the direction of apostasy as seen among professed Christians today?

Give the setting of the golden text, and show Paul's purpose in giving it.

Explain why God does not want anyone to be lost.

How does he help people to meet and overcome temptation?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Warning Against Unbelief

Give the setting of the text for this lesson

How does the Holy Spirit teach today?

How is Jesus related to our confession?

Whose house are we? and what does this mean?

From what Old Testament scripture did Paul quote?

What was the general purpose of that psalm?

What warning does the Holy Spirit give?

How may people's hearts become hardened? and what does this mean?
 What has God decreed regarding the preaching of his word?
 How did the Israelites in the wilderness try or prove Jehovah?
 What is the value of these Old Testament examples to us?
 What did God mean by saying that he was "displeased" with those people?
 Why didn't they know his ways?
 Tell briefly the story of Israel's rejection.

Exhortation to Avoid Such Unbelief

What are the three important lessons to be learned from this part of the text?
 Discuss each one briefly.
 Why does Paul refer to an evil heart of unbelief?
 What mutual duty do all Christians have toward each other?
 Why is there so much neglect or disregard concerning this duty?
 Let each member of the class tell why he

does or does not exhort his brethren in this respect.
 How are people hardened by the deceitfulness of sin? or in what way does sin deceive?
 What does it mean to be a partaker of Christ? and what are the conditions?
 What is "the beginning of our confidence"?
 How can we hold it firm unto the end? and what end?
 Why did Paul quote again from Psalm 95?

A Further Lesson from Jewish History

What is the value of repetition in teaching?
 How many came out of Egypt by Moses? and how many entered Canaan?
 What was the reason for the rejection of the many?
 With what kind of people was Jehovah displeased?
 Is the same principle true of people today?

Lesson IV—July 27, 1958

REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Lesson Text

Heb. 4: 1-11

1 Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

2 For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard.

3 For we who have believed do enter into that rest; even as he hath said,

As I swear in my wrath,

They shall not enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, And God rested on the seventh day from all his works;

5 And in this place again,

They shall not enter into my rest.

Golden Text.—*"Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience"* (Heb. 4: 11.)

Devotional Heading.—Heb. 4: 12-16.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter thereto, and they to whom the good tidings were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience,

7 He again defineth a certain day, To-day, saying in David so long a time afterward (even as hath been said before),

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
 Harden not your hearts.

8 For if Josh'-u-a had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from his.

11 Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience.

Daily Bible Readings

July 21. M.....	Rest Days Under Moses (Ex. 23: 8-13)
July 22. T.....	Rest at the Great Feasts (Ex. 23: 14-23)
July 23. W.....	Jesus Rested (Mark 6: 31, 32)
July 24. T.....	Heavenly Rest (John 14: 1, 2; Rev. 14: 13)
July 25. F.....	New Heaven and New Earth (2 Pet. 3: 1-12)
July 26. S.....	The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 1-7)
July 27. S.....	River of the Water of Life (Rev. 22: 1-9)

Time.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

Place.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

Persons.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The term "rest" represents an idea which is frequently referred to in connection with the people of the Lord. The over-all meaning is that of *relief*, that is, relief from an unhappy or troublesome situation. When Paul wrote that which we know as Second Corinthians, he said, "I had no *relief* for my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother." (2 Cor. 2: 13a.) And again, "For even when we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no *relief*, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." (2 Cor. 7: 5.) And to the Thessalonians he wrote, "And to you that are afflicted *rest* [a noun] with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire," etc. (2 Thess. 1: 6-10.) The words "relief" and "rest" are from the same original term.

The conflict between truth and error and right and wrong will never cease, so long as this world stands;

and this means that God's people will always be involved in situations which, will bring weariness to their souls. "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3: 12.) It is natural therefore for people who are thus situated to long for relief, even to the point of desiring the end of this material world. (2 Pet. 3: 10-13.)

The word "rest," as used in the text for today, carries with it the idea of a *place of rest*, or the place where the rest will be enjoyed. It is interesting to observe that there are several different original words for *rest*, but upon close examination it will be seen that they are from the same general root. If people who long for rest are permitted to enjoy it, there must of necessity be a place, state, or condition where that relief can be realized. The two ideas—rest and the place of rest—cannot therefore be separated: they are two aspects of the same general idea.

The Golden Text

Inasmuch as the golden text for today is a part of the lesson text, we

shall wait until we reach the passage in the regular order before comment.

The Text Explained

An Exhortation Based on Fear
(Heb. 4: 1, 2)

Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. The fear which is referred to here is not a slavish terror, but rather that which tends to caution and care. The practical meaning is that those who have the promise should show diligence in their desire to heed that which God has said about it. They must show the proper respect for the word of the Lord. The sense of fear with which normal people are endowed is a great motivating factor in their behavior.

The present participle "being left" implies that the promise continues with the Lord's people during this age. We, like those in the days of Moses, have such a promise, provided

we remain faithful; and herein lies the force of this exhortation. Obstinate unbelief kept the people of Israel out of Canaan, and the same spirit will keep people of this age out of heaven. But if we are characterized by the fear which Paul recommends, we will be led to respect the will of the Lord, both by believing and doing that which has been spoken.

For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they; but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard. The good tidings which have been preached to us refer to the gospel or good news regarding the heavenly rest at the end of life's journey, just as the good news or gospel of the rest in Canaan was proclaimed to the ancient Hebrews. It should be kept

in mind that the latter was a type of the former. (Gal. 3: 8.) The promise of their respective rests was proclaimed to the people of both dispensations, but it did not profit those of the Mosaic age, *because* of a lack of faith on their part. Paul makes it plain in Rom. 1: 16 that God's message is powerful to save, only in the case of believers. This principle has always been true.

The term "united" is evidently used in a metaphorical sense and probably means about the same thing that is meant when one talks about the uniting or mixing the food which is eaten with the digestive fluids which is essential for digestion and assimilation. In a similar manner, that which is heard in the way of good tidings must be united by faith on the part of those who are addressed: otherwise, no benefit would accrue to them.

Faith is one of the cardinal principles of the Christian religion. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.) Faith comes only by hearing God's word (Rom. 10: 17) and it represents man's part in the scheme of human redemption. God's word and man's faith are the counterparts which, when brought together, will secure the reward. James 2: 14-26 describes the faith which pleases God.

The Promised Rest Identified (Heb. 4: 3-10)

For we who have believed do enter into that rest; even as he hath said. As I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. The literal reading is "the rest." The article is in the original. The rest is that which has been promised and which the ancient Hebrews failed to receive in type. Their failure to gain that rest was implied in the preceding section of our lesson for today; and since unbelief was the cause of their failure, it was natural to say that those who believe will be permitted to enter into the promised rest.

Paul again quotes from Psalm 95: 11: "Wherefore I swore in my wrath, That they should not enter into my

rest." Their failure to enter did not do away with the rest; it still remains, that is, God still has a rest for his people. The rest of Canaan, let it be repeated, was only a type of the heavenly rest which is God's ultimate goal for all of his people.

The illiptical nature of the verse now under consideration must be taken into consideration, if the relation of the clause "although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" is to be understood. The reference is obviously to the seventh-day rest of Gen. 2: 1-3, as may be gathered from the next verse. That was the basis for the sabbath observance under the law of Moses, which the Israelites had already been authorized to keep before God swore that they could not enter into his rest; and the conclusion is that the sabbath-rest was not the rest which the Hebrews failed to gain because of their unbelief.

For he hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, And God rested on the seventh day from all his works. "And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made." (Gen. 2: 1-3.) The term "rested" is used in the sense of cessation, that is, God ceased his creative work—he stopped and brought it to an end.

The rest of God, in the passage now before us, was not necessitated by fatigue, and neither did it consist in idleness (John 5: 17); it was a cessation, that is, a ceasing to do that which he had been doing; and it became a type of the rest which he planned for his people, as was pointed out in the introduction to this lesson. The original word from which we have our term "sabbath" occurs, in its various forms, about seventy times in the Old Testament. It is not always rendered sabbath, as may be seen by reading the following passages which contain the original term: Gen. 8: 22; Josh. 5: 12; Neh. 6: 3; Isa. 14: 4; 24: 8. The English translation in each of these verses is "cease." This is the basic idea in the term

"rest" in the lesson now before us.

When the Israelites under Moses kept the sabbath day they ceased from their secular activities of the other days (Isa. 58: 13, 14), and that rest (cessation) illustrates the idea of rest which has been promised the people of God. It is not idleness (Rev. 22: 3), but a cessation from the toils, trials, and heartaches of this earthly life. When Joshua and Caleb entered into the land of Canaan they experienced a cessation of the horrors of the bondage of Egypt and the wanderings of the terrible wilderness. (Deut. 1: 19.) The idea of cessation must enter into our thinking, if we are to get the lesson regarding the rest of this passage.

And in this place again, They shall not enter into my rest. Paul again quotes from Psalm 95: 11 to show that there is a rest which God promised which is different from the seventh-day sabbath rest. The primary application was to the rest of Canaan, which the host of Israel failed to gain; but the ultimate rest is that of heaven.

Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter therinto, and they to whom the good tidings were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience. Paul's argument here is that God's rest has been provided, and it will eventually be filled with the faithful. He provided the rest and from time to time offered it to his people; but the fact that it was rejected did not cause God to do away with the rest itself. "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter therinto" demonstrates the fact that the promise of the rest remains.

Jesus emphasized this same principle in Luke 14: 15-24, when he spoke of the slighted invitation. After speaking of the excuses which those who had been invited offered, Jesus said, "And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say

unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Those who reject the Lord's invitation injure no one but themselves; the Lord's plan for the rest of his people will not be defeated. The text says that the Israelites "failed to enter in because of disobedience"; and when that statement is considered in the light of Heb. 3: 18, 19, it will be seen that "unbelief" and "disobedience" are used interchangeably. The same idea is set forth in John 3: 36: "He that *believeth* on the Son hath eternal life; but he that *obeyeth* not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

He again defineth a certain day, To-day, saying in David so long a time afterward (even as hath been said before), To-day if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts. Joshua and Caleb did enter into the rest which their fellow Israelites rejected, and that fact might lead some to conclude that the promise regarding the rest was fulfilled then. But Paul, referring again to Psalm 95, calls attention to the fact that, hundreds of years later, when God spoke through David, the promise was still standing and the people were warned not to harden their hearts when they heard his voice.

A lesson which needs to be mentioned frequently is the one which teaches that God's word will always have an effect on those who hear it. (Isa. 55: 10, 11; 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16.) People will either be softened by the gospel message, or their hearts will be hardened; hence, the warning of the text.

For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. This shows that the rest of Canaan was only typical of the rest which has been prepared for God's people. The names *Jesus* and *Joshua* are identical in the Greek of the New Testament. The King James Version has *Jesus* instead of *Joshua*, and the marginal reading of the American Standard Version has *Jesus*. But the reference, of course, was to Joshua the son of Nun who, after the death of Moses, led the children of Israel into the land of promise.

There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. The

expression "sabbath rest" is the translation of a single word in the original, and the original occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is literally a Sabbath's, a sabbath-keeping, a cessation from work which has been finished. This is the perfect consummation toward which all of the faithful are aiming. It lies at the end of the way, but is patterned after God's rest at the beginning. That which happened in Gen. 2: 1-3 therefore became the basis, the pattern, the example of the rest which every child of God will receive when this earthly life has been finished. The whole history of inspiration—from Genesis to Revelation—lies between God's rest at the beginning and that which he has planned for his people at the end. The following quotation from Milligan (p. 135) is very suggestive:

"We have here, then, another beautiful illustration of the symbolical nature and character of the Old Testament economy. As soon as God had finished the work of creation he instituted the Sabbath—(1) for the purpose of commemorating his rest; (2) for the benefit of mankind, by giving them rest from physical labor, and leading them also to higher measures of spiritual culture and enjoyment (Mark 2: 27); and (3) that it might be a means of foreshadowing the heavenly rest, which even then he had in his eternal counsels provided for his faithful and obedient children."

For he that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from his. This shows conclusively that the "sabbath rest" which has been provided for the

faithful was based on and patterned after God's rest when the work of creation had been completed. This verse is the inspired reason for calling the promised rest a "sabbatism." It finds its ideal and actual fulfillment in God's own rest which is mentioned in Gen. 2: 1-3. It is a Sabbath's because those who will enjoy it will have reached a definite stage of attainment—having satisfactorily accomplished God's purpose, even as God did when creation was finished.

A Further Exhortation (Heb. 4: 11)

Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience. This is a natural exhortation, following, as it does, the proof that there is a sabbath rest awaiting the faithful children of God. There is no doubt about the rest; and it follows as a natural consequence, that diligence should characterize every professed follower of the Lord. To give diligence requires that one exert himself, or make every effort to do that which is required of him. No one drifts into the place of eternal rest. (Heb. 2: 1-3.) God requires that his people believe his word and strive to do that which he commands. Peter gives a resume of a successful life in Christ in 2 Pet. 1: 5-11: "For if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To fail in this would be to "fall after the same example of disobedience," or to do as the ancient Israelites did.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the basic idea in the term "rest," as used in this lesson?
Show by the Scriptures that your answer is correct.
Why do faithful Christians experience weariness of souls?
What is the relation between "rest" and "the place of rest"?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

An Exhortation Based on Fear

What is the nature of the "fear" which is referred to here?
What is the relation of "fear" and "obedience"? Discuss fully.

What is the force of the expression "being left" in verse 1?
What kept the Israelites out of Canaan?
How can people today come short of the promise of the Lord?
What is the meaning of "have had good tidings preached unto us"?
In what way were "good tidings" preached to the Israelites?
Why didn't the word of hearing profit them? and what profit?
When is God's word powerful to save?
What was "not united by faith"?
What is the relation of faith in the scheme of human redemption?
When does one's faith please God? Discuss this in the light of Heb. 11: 6 and James 2: 14-26.

The Promised Rest Identified

What is the rest referred to in this verse?

What use did Paul make of Psalm 95: 11?
 What is the significance of the clause "although the works were finished from the foundation of the world"?
 In what sense did God rest?
 What is the literal meaning of the term "sabbath"?
 How did the Israelites keep the sabbath?
 How does the "rest" in the Old Testament sabbath illustrate the rest which is promised to God's people when this life is over?
 How did Paul prove that there is a rest awaiting the faithful?
 What effect does man's rejection have on God's promise? Give reason for your answer.
 How did Jesus illustrate this principle?

How are "unbelief" and "disobedience" related?
 What is meant by "he again defineth a certain day," etc.?
 In what ways does God's word always affect its hearers?
 What is the significance of the statement regarding Joshua?
 What conclusion did Paul reach in verse 9?
 What is the meaning of "sabbath rest"?
 What is the comparison in verse 10?
 A Further Exhortation
 Why this exhortation?
 What is the meaning of diligence?
 How may one be sure of pleasing the Lord and gaining heaven?

Lesson V—August 3, 1958

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Lesson Text

Heb. 5: 1-10

1 For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity;

3 And by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aar'-ôn.

5 So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him,

Thou art my Son,

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable."* (Heb. 7: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 5: 11-14.

This day have I begotten thee:

6 As he saith also in another *place*,
 Thou art a priest for ever
 After the order of Mel-chiz'-e-dek.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear,

8 Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation;

10 Named of God a high priest after the order of Mel-chiz'-e-dek.

Daily Bible Readings

July 28. M..... Mosaic Priests (Ex. 28: 1-4)
 July 29. T..... Consecration of Mosaic Priests (Ex. 29: 1-35)
 July 30. W..... Priests to Be without Blemish (Lev. 21: 17-23)
 July 31. T..... Twenty-Four Courses of Priests (1 Chron. 24: 1-19)
 August 1. F..... Priests Acted as Scribes (Ezra 7: 1-6)
 August 2. S..... Christian Priests (1 Pet. 2: 1-9)
 August 3. S..... Our Great High Priest (Heb. 10: 13-23)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The design of religion, as revealed in the Bible, is to bring man back to God. True religion meets all the re-

quirements of man in the flesh. It takes into consideration man as he is, and as he should be. Man is by

nature a creature of worship, and it is as natural for him to worship as it is for him to eat. In fact, it is impossible for him to live and not worship. He may not always worship the right object or in the right way, but he will worship, nevertheless. This is the reason why true religion is absolutely essential.

There are three basic factors in religion which must be taken into consideration in any adequate study of the subject—viz., the functions of a prophet, priest, and king. Practically speaking, a prophet is God's spokesman to man; a priest is man's spokesman to God; while a king is one who governs or sees that the right relations between God and man are maintained. These relations are maintained in direct ratio to man's

obedience to the properly constituted governor or ruler.

It is a fact, clearly set forth in the Bible, that no individual other than Jesus had all three of these functions invested in him. Perhaps the nearest approach was found in Samuel who was a prophet, priest, and judge; but a judge was not a king. No one individual in the Bible ever fully typified Jesus—not even Moses who was probably the greatest single figure of Old Testament history. It required Moses and Joshua both to lead the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, or into the promised land. Jesus indeed is our Prophet, Priest, and King; and in our lesson today we shall study The meaning of the second of these relations—his priesthood.

The Golden Text

But he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. This statement was made in comparing the priesthood of Christ with that of the Levitical order. Paul said in the first part of the sentence which includes the golden text, *"And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing: but he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable."* The Levites who were priests could serve only as long as they lived, and that required that others of their order succeed them; but in the case of Christ it was different: he did not become a priest until after he arose from the dead to die no more.

The Jewish Christians to whom Paul wrote would readily admit that death was a final factor in the tenure of the priestly office; and then when he showed from their own scriptures that Christ did not become a priest until after he was raised up from the dead, his argument regarding the priesthood of Christ was conclusive.

He had already pointed out that a change in the priesthood made a change in the law necessary (7: 12); and it followed therefore, according to Paul's argument, that the law of Christ had superseded the law of Moses.

Other books of the New Testament, particularly Galatians and Romans, point out the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, but it remained for Hebrews to set forth the actual transition. This is the reason that the Book of Hebrews is in a class to itself. The law of each dispensation depended upon the priesthood of that age. This fact is clearly set forth in the chapter from which the golden text is taken; and if the apostle can prove the genuineness of the priesthood of Christ, his task in trying to convince his brethren that they should continue loyal to Christ will have been accomplished. The golden text therefore is a ringing affirmation: *"But he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable,"* that is, *inviolable*. See margin.

The Text Explained

The Qualifications of a High Priest (Heb. 5: 1-4)

For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God. Paul's object in giving the qualifications of a high priest is to encourage

his readers to draw near unto the throne of grace, as mentioned in the closing verses of chapter four: *"Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched*

with the feelings of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." (Heb. 4: 14-16.)

It should be observed that the high priest (the apostle, of course, is talking about the high priest who was ordained of God) was taken, from among men, not from the angels. This was true because it was necessary for him to know and understand the people for whom he was to intercede. Paul's readers evidently understood this principle, as it respected the Levitical priesthood; and the comparison which he draws between that priesthood and the one belonging to Christ will enable those reading his message to understand the priesthood of Christ much better.

The high priest had definite duties to perform: "he was appointed for men in things pertaining to God." This is to say that his duties were "religious" rather than secular. Those who are familiar with the law of Moses are aware of the fact that the tribe of Levi did not receive the type of inheritance which was allotted to the other tribes. The priests and Levites who were appointed to the service which was required by the law were supported by the tithes which the others were instructed to give. The "things pertaining to God" were those which had to do with the worship and service which the law of Moses authorized.

That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. This is strong testimony for the fact of sin; for if there were no sin, then there would be no need for sacrifices; and if there were no need for sacrifice there would, of course, be no need for a priesthood. The fact that we are all sinners should cause us to take advantage of the service of the priest who has been ordained of God to offer sacrifices for sins. The terms "gifts" and "sacrifices" are sometimes used interchangeably when they are employed singly; but when they are used together as in this text, they indicate bloodless and bloody offerings, respectively.

Who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring. The expression

"bear gently" literally means to moderate one's feelings, or to be moderate or tender in judgment toward the errors of others. It denotes here, according to Vincent, a state of feeling toward the ignorant and erring which is neither too severe or too tolerant. This same authority goes on to say that the high priest must not be betrayed into irritation at sin and ignorance, neither must he be weakly indulgent.

The "ignorant and erring" apparently refers to sins committed through ignorance. The law of Moses provided for appropriate steps to be taken when sins were committed unawares or accidentally, and sins into which men were betrayed by passion. (Num. 15: 22-29.) It seems that atonement for the sins of ignorance was required by law as a means of educating the moral sense, and also to show that sin and defilement might exit unsuspected. This would teach the people that God sees evil where man does not and that his test of purity is stricter than that of human beings.

The high priest therefore was required to sympathize with those who fell into temptation or sinned through ignorance, but in the case of high-handed or presumptuous sin he was not even permitted to show any sympathy. "But the soul that doeth aught with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemeth Jehovah: and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of Jehovah, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." (Num. 15: 30, 31; verses 32-36.)

For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity: Inasmuch as the priest in question was taken from among men, he was, of course, subject to the passions and temptations of men; and it is always true that a proper sense of one's own infirmities will enable him to be more considerate of others who fall into sin. That is also the spirit of the New Testament, as may be seen by the following statement: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the laws of Christ." (Gal. 6: 1, 2; James 2: 13.)

And by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. The law of Moses required the high' priest to present the sin-offering for himself and his house before he made the sacrifice for the people. "And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house. . . .

"Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with his blood as he did with the blood of the bullock. . . ." (Lev. 16: 6, 15, 16.) This practice would serve to make the high priest more conscious of his own sins, and therefore more sympathetic with the people.

And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron. This is another essential qualification of the high priest, and it was an additional reason why the people should trust in him. He did not assume the office to satisfy his own ambition, but was divinely called to it in order to serve God's purpose of restoring men to his fellowship. An inspired example of people claiming for themselves the priesthood without being called of God is found in Numbers, chapters 16 and 17.

Some people have tried to make the "honor" spoken of in the passage now before us refer to the "Christian ministry," as it is often called; but there is no foundation in fact for such an idea.

After the Order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5: 5, 6)

So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest. This is further evidence that the "honor" spoken of in the preceding verse has reference to the priesthood which was ordained of God, and not the ministry of preaching as some have claimed. Fausset observes that all Christians, without distinction, whether ministers or people, have a spiritual, not literal, priesthood. (1 Pet. 2: 5, 9; Rev. 1: 6.) The sacrifices which Christians offer are spiritual, their bodies and the fruit of their

lips. (Rom. 12: 1; Heb. 13: 15.) Christ alone had a proper and true sacrifice to offer. The sacrifices of the law were typical, while those of Christians are metaphorical; but the sacrifice which Christ as our High Priest offered was the source from which all other sacrifices received their meaning. But Christ did not assume the High Priesthood of the Christian confession (Heb. 3: 1) of his own accord; he was called to the office just as Aaron was.

But he that spake unto him, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee: This quotation is from Psalm 2: 7 and has reference to the Sonship of Christ which was fully confirmed by his resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1: 4.) There is therefore a close connection between the Sonship of Christ and his priesthood. In fact, it appears that the appointment to the priesthood was involved in, and resulted from, his Sonship, which qualified him for it. No one else could fill such an office as that which had to do with the actual sacrifice for sin. (Heb. 10: 5-9.) Christ did not constitute himself the Son of God, and neither did he assume the high priesthood of his own volition; the entire matter resulted from the omnipotent will of the Father.

As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek. The 110th Psalm, from which this quotation was taken, was generally understood as a Messianic psalm, and Christ was declared therein to be both a king and a priest by the decree of Jehovah. His position was thereby independent of fleshly descent and was superior to the dignity of the Levitical order of priests. The "order" of Melchizedek means after or according to the rank or manner in which Melchizedek was a priest. Arndt and Gingrich note that it was according to the nature of, that is, just like Melchizedek, the reference being, not only to the higher rank, but also to the entirely different nature of Melchizedek's priesthood as compared with that of Aaron. This point of comparison will be further discussed in Lesson VII of this quarter.

In the Days of His Flesh (Heb. 5: 7-10)

Who in the days of his flesh, having

offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear. The days of his flesh refers to the period of our Lord's humiliation and suffering while he was here upon the earth, and particularly to his experiences in the shadow of the cross, as set forth in the garden of Gethsemane. The prayers and supplications were his petitions for divine help. This not only shows that Christ not only did not assume the high priesthood of his own will, but that he passed through the deepest humiliation and suffering in order to prepare himself for the duties which were involved in the office.

His prayers and supplications were addressed to God who was able to save him from death, and Paul says that he was heard for his godly fear. This shows that God can and does hear and answer prayer without giving the exact thing requested. Jesus prayed three times that the cup might depart from him; and while these petitions were not granted, he, nevertheless, was heard and received the strength to endure his suffering. Paul had a similar experience, as recorded in 2 Cor. 12: 7-10, with similar results. God is never indifferent to the prayers and supplications of his people. (Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he

suffered. This must be understood in the light of the statement that Christ did not assume the high priesthood of his own will. He was indeed a Son, but he did not receive his preparation for the office from that relationship; he became a perfect high priest as a result of his suffering. The suffering was necessary to the end to be achieved; and this is implied in the fact that his prayers and supplications were heard.

And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation. Jesus was perfectly equipped for his work as a priest as a result of special discipline involved in his suffering; and he therefore became unto all them who obey him the source or originator of their salvation. The marginal reading for "author" is cause. This is enough to show that the salvation which we enjoy in Christ cannot antedate the death, burial, and resurrection of him who made it possible. (1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) This salvation was spoken first by Christ, and is fully identified in Mark 16: 14-20.

Named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. This appears to be the climax of Paul's argument regarding the high priesthood of Christ. After his thorough preparation, he was designated and called a high priest by the Father himself after the order of Melchizedek, and not after that of Aaron.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the meaning of religion, as revealed in the Bible, and its purpose?
What is man's natural attitude toward worship? and why?

What are the three basic factors in religion?

Give the meaning and purpose of each.

Discuss the fact that no one individual in history ever completely typified Jesus.

The Golden Text

What was Paul's purpose in the passage which serves as this golden text?

Why was it necessary to establish the fact of Christ's high priesthood?

What is the importance of the Book of Hebrews in this respect?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Qualifications of a High Priest

What was Paul's object in giving these qualifications?

Why was the high priest taken from

among men?

For what particular purpose was the high priest appointed?

What is implied in his offering gifts and sacrifices?

What is the difference between "gifts" and "sacrifices," if any?

What does it mean to bear gently with the ignorant and erring?

Who were the "ignorant and erring"?

Why the difference in the attitude between sins of ignorance and high-handed sins?

What does the knowledge of one's own sins usually do for him?

For whom was the high priest to sacrifice for sins? and why?

No man taketh what honor unto himself?

After the Order of Melchizedek

In what sense did Christ not glorify himself to be made a high priest?

What is meant by the "priesthood of believers"?

Why did Paul quote a passage involving the Sonship of Christ in connection with his priesthood?

What would be the likely effect of the quotation from Psalm 110 on his readers?

Why after the order of Melchizedek and not after that of Aaron?

In the Days of His Flesh

What were the days of his flesh?

What is the meaning of prayers and supplications?

Why did Paul introduce this statement?

In what sense did God hear the prayers and supplications of Christ?

Show why it is not always necessary for God to give the exact thing requested in order to hear and answer prayer.

Why was it essential for the "Son" to learn obedience? and what obedience?

In what sense was Christ made perfect through suffering?

For whom is his salvation intended?

In what sense is Christ the "author" of their salvation?

Lesson VI—August 10, 1958

GOING ON UNTO PERFECTION

Lesson Text

Heb. 6: 1-10

1 Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

4 For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 And tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come,

6 And *then* fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto re-

pentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

7 For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God:

8 But if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak:

10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister.

Golden Text.—*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet. 3: 18a.)

Devotional Reading.—Heb. 6: 11-20.

Daily Bible Readings

- August 4. M.....Admonition to Solomon (1 Chron. 28: 1-9)
- August 5. T.....Jehovah and Abraham (Gen. 17: 1-9)
- August 6. W.....End of Perfection (Psalm 119: 1-6, 96)
- August 7. T.....Paul's Goal (Phil. 3: 12-15)
- August 8. F.....Perfect in Every Good Work (Heb. 13: 20, 21)
- August 9. S.....Perfect Law of Liberty (James 1: 1-25)
- August 10. S.....Perfect Man Causes No Stumbling (James 3: 1-18)

Time.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

Place.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

Persons.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The term "perfection," as used in the text now before us, means full growth (margin) or maturity in contrast to the elementary condition which was referred to in the last paragraph of chapter five. The people to whom the letter was addressed had been going backward instead of

forward; and it is unfortunate that the same condition is often seen today. No one can stand still in the Christian life. He will either go forward as God intends that he should, or he will find himself drifting with the current.

The Hebrew brethren had deteri-

orated to the point where they had "need of milk, and not of solid food." The apostles then went on to tell them that "every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." This explains why so many professed Christians claim that they are unable to see anything wrong with many things which others recognize as being com-

pletely incompatible with the Christian life.

No one accidentally grows into the type of character which pleases God. There are certain things which one must do if he goes on to perfection. He must be willing to eat the spiritual food which has been provided for him, and when that is done the result will not be disappointing. Peter describes the process in the first part of his second epistle, and it is a wholesome exercise to read and study that passage frequently. (2 Pet. 1: 1-11.)

The Golden Text

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The soul of man is the most important truth about him. This is true because the soul came directly from God and has a direct connection with him. But notwithstanding its immortality, the soul must grow if the blessings which it is capable of enjoying and which the Lord has provided for it are to be received; and, like all other growth, it must be according to the fundamental laws of growth which God gave to regulate all such development.

The fundamental laws of growth are not hard to discover, and any one who is willing to abide by them and order his life accordingly will grow into the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Grace* means the Lord's favor, while the *knowledge* is that which may be gained through the study of his revealed, will.... The need for this growth may be seen by considering the verse which immediately preceded Peter's exhortation as set forth in the golden text: "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing

these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

The fundamental laws of growth are (1) *vital force*. A plant cannot grow unless it is rooted in its native soil and surrounded by wholesome atmosphere; and the same is true of a soul. (2) *Wholesome food which meets all the requirements of the soul*. (Heb. 5: 11-14.) (3) *Active use of all the powers with which we are endowed*. Compare Eph. 4: 16: "From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." (4) *Periods of rest*. The Christian life is both active and meditative, and one is as important as the other. These laws, if carefully observed, will result in a soul which is pleasing to God.

The Text Explained

The Apostolic Exhortation

(Heb. 6: 1-10)

Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ. In the closing part of chapter 5, Paul had told his readers that they were in no condition to perceive the truth regarding the priesthood of Christ, and it seems to be his purpose here to arouse them from their state of lethargy. He therefore calls upon them to leave the doctrine of the first principles of Christ. The reference

is to the teaching (word) regarding the elementary truths concerning Christ. It should be kept in mind that Paul is exhorting them to leave "the word of the beginning concerning Christ," and not the law of Moses, as such.

The Hebrew brethren were not urged to cease to believe the things which they had been taught regarding Christ, but to leave them in the sense that one leaves a foundation when building a house, or the alphabet

when learning a language. One does not repudiate his text books after finishing school; he simply endeavors to make a practical application of the things which he learned from them.

Let us press on unto perfection. The perfection here, as already indicated, means maturity, or a knowledge which should characterize people who have been Christians for a reasonable period of time. "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food." (Heb. 5: 12.) This implies that the Lord expects his people to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Not laying again a foundation. The importance of a foundation for a superstructure cannot be overemphasized. Unless the foundation is laid, and laid well, the building itself is sure to suffer damage. But after the foundation is laid, one should go on with the building and not return to laying the foundation again.

The foundation principles which are to be "left behind" are listed in verses 1 and 2 and they may be regarded as illustrative of the apostle's proposal to proceed to the exposition of the doctrine of the priesthood of Christ. Christian maturity can never be attained by a continuous return to the subjects which belong to the earliest stage of Christian instruction. It appears that Paul selected for his illustration things which belong to the very beginning of the Christian life.

Of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. It frequently happens that when people find repentance preceding faith in a passage like this they miss the point of the inspired penman. (Acts 20: 21; Mark 1: 15.) The reference here is not to their order in the gospel plan of salvation. This first pair of fundamental principles cannot be separated in actual life and no one can get their order reversed in practical obedience. A man repents because a new belief has found its way into his mind. The "dead works" mentioned here are not merely sinful works as that expression is ordinarily understood, but works without the element of life

which comes through faith in the living God; and there is therefore a sharp contrast between dead works and faith. This truth was among the very first which would have to be taught to a Jew who was being led to accept Christianity. (Tit. 3: 5.) They had been accustomed to depend on works for their salvation. (Eph. 2: 8-10.)

Of the teaching of baptism, and of laying on of hands. This is the second pair of fundamental principles. Whatever may be the exact meaning of "baptisms," it is well to keep in mind the fact that there is in reality only one literal baptism. (Eph. 4: 5.) There are several metaphorical baptisms (Matt. 3: 11, 12; Mark 10:38, 39), but only one literal baptism. It is possible that Paul in this passage was contrasting the various washings of the Old Testament and the baptism of John with the baptisms which belonged to the reign of Christ; but since the "teaching of baptisms" was a fundamental principle of the doctrine of Christ, it would more probably include the teaching regarding the baptisms (both literal and metaphorical) which were related to Christ.

All of these questions would have to be understood before a Jew, or any one else, for that matter, could intelligently obey the gospel. One of the chief reasons for the rejection of water baptism as a condition of salvation by people today is their utter lack of an understanding of the difference between the literal and metaphorical baptisms of Christ. This is fundamental to an acceptance with God; and when people learn the truth regarding them they no longer hesitate to accept the New Testament teaching regarding water baptism as a condition of salvation. (Acts 10: 47, 48.)

The laying on of hands is frequently referred to in both the Old and the New Testament. In the days of the early church the practice had various significances, including the "ordination" of elders, deacons, and evangelists. In some instances miraculous gifts were imparted through the laying on of hands, but that practice passed with the age of miracles. In the Old Testament we learn that when a man brought an animal to the priest to be offered as a sacrifice,

it was necessary for him to lay his hand on the animal's head before it was slain. This indicated that the animal was being offered for him. (Lev. 1: 3, 4.)

If the laying on of hands has any present-day application, it appears that the significance is similar to the case just mentioned, that is, when hands are laid upon any one, such as an elder, deacon, or evangelist, he is to act for, or on behalf of, those who authorized the act—the church in question. It is certain that no miraculous gift is imparted now.

And of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. This third pair of fundamental principles has to do with the outlook under which the believer in Christ was to live. The subject of the resurrection from the dead involves more than simply the resurrection of the body; the question includes the whole inquiry about the future state, or whether or not man would continue to live after this life is over. The resurrection was denied by the Sadducees (Acts 23: 8) and ridiculed by the heathen philosophers (Acts 17: 32), but it was fundamental to the doctrine of Christ. The question of the eternal judgment will determine the final destiny of those who are raised from the dead. This is one of the most important subjects which can engage the attention of man.

And this will we do, if God permit. The New Testament clearly teaches that Christians should always take into account the will of God in all their plans and purposes. "Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil. To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 13-18; John 15: 5; Acts 18: 21; 1 Cor. 16: 7.)

"That is, we will, with the help of God, go on to perfection. The Apostle well knew that without God's help, they could accomplish nothing. (John 15: 5.) And hence while urging his

brethren, by all the high motives of the gospel, to greater diligence in making their calling and election sure, he is careful to remind them of the necessity of submitting to the will of God, and looking to him for help in all things."

—Milligan.

Danger and Awful Consequences of Apostasy (Heb. 6: 4-8)

For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift. In verses 4-6 we find Paul's reason for not attempting again to lay a foundation. Verses 4-6a contain a description of those who might fall away; 6b shows the impossibility of renewing them again unto repentance; while 6c gives the reason for the impossibility. The enlightening agency was the word of God. "Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8: 12; Eph. 5: 7-14; Col. 1: 13.) The "heavenly gift" is probably the new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 17; Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 3: 1-4), while the term "tasted" means to experience, that is, they had received and had realized something of the meaning of the life which had been imparted to them.

And were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been promised to all who obey the gospel, a blessing which is frequently referred to as the "indwelling of the Spirit." (Acts 2: 38, 39; Gal. 3: 14; 4: 6; John 7: 37-39; Rom. 8: 9-11; 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) The word for "partakers" is also found in Heb. 3: 1 and is used in the sense of sharing in the blessing of the heavenly calling, and in this verse, the Holy Spirit. When this is considered in the light of the fruit of the Spirit, the idea is that of a character which is thereby gained as a result of a vital development.

And tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come. The "good word of God" is probably "the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." (1 Pet. 1: 25.) This word contains God's promises, and the people under consideration had tasted, made trial of, or experienced it and found it to be good; they found that what God had pro-

claimed was true, and that the promises made by him were all that Divinity claimed for them. (Zech. 1: 13.) The "age to come" seems to be the Christian dispensation, and "the persons described have so fully entered into the spirit of the new time and have so admitted into their life the powers which Christ brings to bear upon men, that they can be said to have 'tasted' or experienced the spiritual forces of the new era." (*The Expositor's Greek Testament, in loco.*)

And then fell away. The hypothesis here introduced describes a condition which Paul considered possible. The accumulated description which has just been given presents a picture of people who not only had professed Christianity, but who had enjoyed the rich experience of its peculiar and characteristic influence. But it was possible for them to fall away, that is, go into total apostasy.

It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. This is a statement of fact, a portrayal of the terrible possibilities of those who go backward instead of forward. (2 Thess. 2: 8-12.) *Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.* The apostate crucifies Jesus in that he virtually confirms the judgment of the original crucifiers, that is, they say, in effect, that they have tried him and found that he does not meet their needs and is therefore worthy of

death. (Heb. 10: 26-29.) This is the reason why they cannot be renewed again unto repentance. They put him to an open shame in that they expose him to public disgrace—so far as they are concerned, he is not the Saviour that he claimed to be, and they no longer trust him.

Verses 7 and 8 present an analogy in nature to the doom of apostates; their final end is complete destruction. (Matt. 7: 16-20; John 15: 6.)

An Expression of Confidence

(Heb. 6: 9, 10)

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. The seriousness of the situation made it necessary for Paul to issue the grave warning regarding apostasy; but he hastens to reassure the Hebrew brethren that he does not consider them apostates. It would, however, be necessary for them to give attention to the things which "belong to" (margin) salvation. (Heb. 2: 1-3.)

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister. This verse gives the reason for Paul's confidence; their work and love were still in evidence, although they had failed to grow as they should. (Heb. 10: 32-36; Matt. 25: 31-46.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What does the word "perfection," as used in this lesson, mean? and why was it employed here?

Is the same lesson needed now? Give reason for your answer.

What was the condition of the people to whom Paul wrote?

Why can't some professed Christians see harm in many sinful practices?

What is necessary in order to reach perfection, that is, maturity?

The Golden Text

What kind of growth must characterize those who please God?

Why is it necessary for the soul to grow?

What are the fundamental laws of growth? Discuss each one briefly.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Apostolic Exhortation

What was Paul's purpose in this exhortation?

What is meant by the doctrine of the first principles of Christ?

What was meant by "leaving" this doctrine?

What does the Lord expect of his people within a reasonable time?

What is meant by "not laying again a foundation"? and how was it first laid?

What place did these foundation principles have in Paul's argument?

Repentance from what dead works?

What is the relation of repentance and faith?

What was the teaching of "baptisms"? and why was it needed?

Is such teaching still needed? why?

What place does the laying on of hands have in the Christian system?

Why is the doctrine of the resurrection and eternal judgment fundamental?

Why say, "And this will we do, if God permit?"

Danger and Awful Consequences of Apostasy

How are people enlightened and what is the "heavenly gift"?

In what sense are Christians made partakers of the Holy Spirit?

How do they taste the good word of God?
 and what is that word?
 What are the powers of the age to come?
 Why is it possible for such people to fall
 away?
 Why is it impossible to renew them again
 unto repentance?
 What is meant by crucifying Christ afresh,
 and putting him to an open shame?
 What is the lesson in the analogy of verses
 7 and 8?

An Expression of Confidence
 Why did Paul speak as he did, if he had
 confidence in the Hebrew brethren?
 What are the things which belong to sal-
 vation?
 In what way were their work and love
 manifested?
 Why would God remember them?
 What reason did Paul have for his confi-
 dence in them?
 What is the value of this lesson to us?

Lesson VII—August 17, 1958

MELCHIZEDEK, KING OF SALEM

Lesson Text

Heb. 7: 1-6, 11-17

1 For this Mel-chiz'-e-dek, king of Sa'-lem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

2 To whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Sa'-lem, which is, King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils.

5 And they indeed of the sons of Le'-vi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though these have come out of the loins of Abraham:

6 But he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises.

11 Now if there was perfection through the Le-vit'-ic-al priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should arise after the order of Mel-chiz'-e-dek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aar'-on?

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13 For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Ju'-dah; as to which tribe Mó'-ses spake nothing concerning priests.

15 And *what we say* is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Mel-chiz'-e-dek there ariseth another priest,

16 Who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life:

17 For it is witnessed *of him*, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Mel-chiz'-e-dek.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* (Heb. 7: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 7: 18-28.

Daily Bible Readings

August 11. M.....	Melchizedek, King of Salem (Gen. 14: 18-20)
August 12. T.....	A Priest Forever (Psalm 110: 1-7)
August 13. W.....	Christ, Priest of Order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5: 1-7)
August 14.	T. Christ, Our Forerunner (Heb. 6: 13-20)
August 15.	F. Some Priests Corrupt (Jer. 23: 1-12)
August 16. S.....	Zealous Priests (1 Chron. 9: 10-13)
August 17. S.....	Priests Before the Law (Ex. 19: 20-23)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The Epistle to the Hebrews is largely occupied with showing that the office and work of Christ, as the great High Priest, is the reality of that which was typified by the Aaronic priesthood. The contrast between the eternal and unchangeable priesthood of Christ and the ministries of all other earthly priests is fully set forth in this letter. The earthly priests were mortal men, subject to death, and when they passed away it was necessary to transmit the office to their successors. But this was not true of Christ; his priesthood will continue as long as the world shall last.

The transition from Judaism to Christianity was very difficult for the Hebrew people to make. They had failed to understand the real mission of the Messiah, and that failure stood squarely in the way of their accepting Jesus as the Messiah; and

this, in turn, made it difficult for them to take hold of the idea that Jesus could be a priest. But when once they realized the nature of the priesthood of Christ, it was relatively easy for them to see that a new and better law was necessary.

Not only would Christ become a high priest, but his priesthood would be of a higher order than that of Aaron. Paul cited the Messianic scriptures to show the truthfulness of the statement just made, and that testimony clearly revealed the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron. The reasoning of the apostle showed that Jehovah promised a new order of priesthood, that of Melchizedek, and that the order was superior to the priesthood of Aaron. When Paul's arguments in this connection are clearly understood, it is easy then to see the need for a new and superior law to govern God's people.

The Golden Text

Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. The term "saved," as used in this text, is largely of a spiritual significance, involving a right relationship to God, and a consequent state or condition in one's own self. There are three basic ideas which should be considered here. (1) Salvation from foes and mischances which are incident to this life, 1 Cor. 10: 13; (2) salvation from one's own worse self and from the terrible power of evil habit, Rom. 7: 24; (3) salvation from sin here and from eternal destruction in the world to come, Acts 16: 30; 1 Pet. 1: 3-5.

The ability of Christ to save is the theme of the entire New Testament. (Matt. 1: 21; Luke 19: 10.) He is able to save to the uttermost (completely, margin.) The idea stressed in the text is not *perpetual*, but rather *complete* or *perfect* salvation. There is no degree of guilt from which he cannot save to the uttermost degree of man's need, but his salvation is

conditional: "them that draw near unto God through him." (Heb. 5: 8, 9.) The reason for his ability to save to the uttermost is his continuous intercession. Christ intercedes with God on our behalf. He spent his life on earth in the interest of men, and the text affirms that he continues to devote himself to the same cause; he continually identifies himself with the needs of his people.

But, as already pointed out, this salvation is conditional. The original for "draw near" is a present participle and indicates the *habit* of those who draw near unto God in order to seek his grace. (Heb. 4: 16.) This practice implies a *daily* delight rather than an *occasional* privilege. Those who draw near unto God are characterized by reverence—they realize that they are in God's presence; they also have confidence (Isa. 26: 3; Phil. 4: 6, 7; Heb. 13: 5, 6); and they are obedient (2 Cor. 5: 9; 1 John 5: 3.) No one can imbib the spirit of this Golden Text without being made better spiritually.

The Text Explained

A Continuing Priesthood

(Heb. 7: 1-3)

For this *Melchizedek*. Paul began the discussion of the order of Melchizedek in chapter 5, but the discussion was interrupted, due to the "infantile state" of the readers. The subject, however, was skillfully mentioned again at the conclusion of the interpolated admonition (Heb. 5: 11; 6: 20), and the discussion was resumed at the beginning of chapter 7. It appears that the principle reason for introducing the priesthood of Melchizedek was its continuous feature. There were, of course, other reasons for the discussion, as will be seen in this study, but the one just mentioned seems to be the chief one: "For this Melchizedek, . . . abideth a priest continually."

King of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. The first thing that the inspired writer does in this discussion of the priesthood of Melchizedek is to give a brief history of Melchizedek himself, based, no doubt, on Gen. 14: 18-20. He is called "king of Salem" which is generally understood to mean the same as "king of Jerusalem." Psalm 76: 2 where "Salem" and "Zion" are used interchangeably. Melchizedek was also called "priest of God most High." He was therefore at once a king and a priest. This is an important point to remember.

To *whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all.* The chief point in the apostle's argument regarding the relationship between Melchizedek and Abraham is that the former was superior to the latter: "But without any dispute the less is blessed of the better." (Heb. 7: 7.) Paul, in making this comparison, was laying the groundwork for showing that the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of Aaron. The student should thoroughly familiarize himself with the historical record as found in Gen. 14: 18-20. The blessing which Melchizedek pronounced upon Abraham was not merely a good wish, but an authoritative intercession as a priest of God Most High. He was therefore Abraham's superior.

Being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King

of Salem, which is King of peace. Thus, not only was Melchizedek a type of Christ in the respect of the priesthood, but his very name and position correspond with the characteristic properties of the Messianic kingdom. Melchizedek was not only a king and a priest, but two of the most prominent features of the reign of Christ—righteousness and peace—were also identified with him. (Psalm 72: 7.)

Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God. This statement is not to be understood in its absolute, literal sense, but rather, insofar as he appears in the Scriptures, he was without father, mother, etc. His genealogy is not given. These facts concerning him were evidently omitted from the inspired record on purpose, so that Melchizedek would be a true type of Christ. He was what he was by virtue of his own personality, and did not derive his office from any priestly lineage or hereditary right: he became a priest, so far as the record goes, simply by the appointment of Jehovah; and that is what happened in the case of Christ. It should be observed that Melchizedek was "made like unto the son of God," and not like unto the Son of man. All that is affirmed of Melchizedek in the statement at the head of this paragraph was also true of Christ before the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1: 14.)

Abideth a priest continually. There is no historical account of the termination of the priesthood of Melchizedek, and, so far as the record goes, the tenure of his office is uninterrupted; the emphasis is on its eternal duration. If Melchizedek had had a successor in office, historically speaking, we would have to say that he *was* a priest of the Most High God in the days of Abraham; but as the matter now stands, we say, he *is* the priest, that is, so far as the record goes, his priesthood did not cease. It is hardly necessary to say that if this were literally true, then there are two high priests reigning now, viz., Melchizedek and Christ. This, of course, is not true. Christ alone is the high priest in this dispensation.

The Superior Nature of Melchizedek's Priesthood

(Heb. 7: 4-6)

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils. In showing the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek to that of the Levitical, two points are emphasized, viz., his greatness is recognizable (1) in his receiving tithes of Abraham, and (2) in his blessing the patriarch. These facts were drawn from inspired history, and Paul's readers could not deny it; and when this was coupled with the messianic prediction of Psalm 110: 4, the apostle's case was conclusive.

And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though these have come out of the loins of Abraham. The significance of the statement regarding tithing is seen when it is considered that the tithing among the Jews was the result of mere legal appointment, and did not result in any feeling of superiority or inferiority; for they were all children of Abraham. But in the case of Melchizedek and Abraham, the situation was different. So far as the record goes, Abraham was under no legal obligation to pay tithes to Melchizedek, but did so as a tribute to his personal greatness.

But he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises. Melchizedek, who had no part in the Levitical genealogy, and therefore no legal right to exact tithes, took tithes from their great ancestor; and that fact demonstrated that he was greater than Abraham. This fact is further confirmed by the fact that Melchizedek, in turn, blessed Abraham; and, "without any dispute the less is blessed of the better." The point which Paul is emphasizing may be paraphrased in these words: Although Abraham had the promises, and was therefore himself a fountain of blessings to all mankind and the one on whom all succeeding generations must depend on for blessings (Gen. 12: 1-3), yet this great patriarch was blessed by one who was greater than he, even Melchizedek. Paul has

therefore established the fact that the priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to that of Aaron.

Both the Levitical Priesthood and the Law had to be Superseded

(Heb. 7: 11-17)

Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron? When Paul proved that the Levitical priesthood was inferior to that of Melchizedek, he also demonstrated that the former was both imperfect and incapable of leading to perfection. The term "perfection" is used in the sense of God's aim or purpose in bringing man to the highest goal in moral and religious attainment. The fact of the Aaronic priesthood's inability to reach that goal is presupposed in the question of this verse, and the apostle proceeds at once to prove it. (Rom. 10: 4; Gal. 3: 21, 22.)

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. The very fact that a new priesthood was promised in the messianic scriptures (Psalm 110: 4) was sufficient ground for a necessary inference that the existing priesthood was inadequate for God's ultimate purpose regarding man's highest good. If perfection could come at all under the Mosaic economy, it would have to come through the Levitical priesthood, since that priesthood was the "basis" for the law; but inasmuch as that system proved inadequate for the purpose, it had to be superseded by another priesthood which would become the basis for a newer and better covenant.

Paul showed in the parenthesis of verse 11 the close relation between the Levitical priesthood and the law of Moses which implied that if one was imperfect and unsatisfying, the same would also be true of the other; and now in verse 12 he makes the application. The law was inseparably bound up with the Levitical priesthood, and whatever happened to one would of necessity happen to the other. Thus, when the apostle shows the need for a new priesthood he also lays the foundation for his argu-

ment regarding the new covenant, which is the subject of our next lesson.

For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. This is a reference to the prediction of Psalm 110:4, that is, "he" of whom these things are said was the one who was to be the priest after the order of Melchizedek. Thus, for the first time in this chapter, Paul introduces the fulfillment of that psalm. The law of Moses prescribed that the priesthood should be of the order of Aaron, but since that priesthood proved inadequate for man's highest good, it became necessary for a new priesthood, not of that order, to set aside the law.

The apostle says that the one who was to be the new priest (Psalm 110:

4) belonged, that is, "hath partaken of," (Heb. 2: 14) another tribe, a tribe which was not permitted to serve at the altar. This is enough to show that the new priesthood would be entirely different from that of the old order, and would set aside the entire legal system of the Jewish economy.

For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. The other tribe referred to in the preceding verse is named here—the tribe of Judah, a tribe which, according to Moses, could not furnish men for the priesthood. The original word for "hath sprung" is used several times in the New Testament, as well as in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. The following passages suggest something of the imagery which it depicts. Matt. 4: 16; Mark 16: 2; Luke 12: 54; 2 Pet. 1: 19; Isa. 11: 1; Jer. 33: 15; Mal. 4:

2. Matthew 22: 41-46 shows that it was generously understood among the Jews that Psalm 110 had reference to a descendant of David, and therefore of the tribe of Judah.

And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. The change in the law which Paul mentioned in verse 12 is evident from the fact that Christ belonged to the non-priestly tribe of Judah, but it is more abundantly evident from the nature of the new priest, who is constituted, not after the law which pertained to fleshly relationships, but because there was an indissoluble power from God which resided and worked in him. "For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore." (Heb. 7: 28.)

For it is witnessed of him, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek. The "order of Melchizedek" refers not only to his higher rank, but also to the entirely different nature of his priesthood as compared with that of Aaron. Jesus was a high priest just like Melchizedek, that is, according to the nature of the latter's priesthood. Melchizedek was made a priest by the commandment of God, his priesthood was endless, so far as the record is concerned, and he was a king as well as a priest. These things are also affirmed of the priesthood of Jesus. (Heb. 7: 23, 24, 28; Zech 6: 13.) Paul has thoroughly established the fact of a change in the priesthood, and he will next give his attention to the change in the law.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the principal purpose of the

Book of Hebrews?

Why is it difficult for devout Jews to accept Christianity?

Why do not Jewish people today accept Christ?

Why is the subject of the priesthood of Christ so important?

The Golden Text

What is the meaning of the term "saved"?

Name three aspects of the salvation we enjoy in Christ.

What is meant by saying that Christ is able to save to the uttermost?

Why is Christ able to save in this manner?

What condition must be met in order to enjoy this salvation?

What is meant by drawing near unto God?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED A Continuing Priesthood

Who was Melchizedek?

What was Paul's purpose in introducing his priesthood?

Recite the Old Testament account of Melchizedek.

What was he in addition to being a priest?
 In what way did Abraham show his regard for Melchizedek?
 What was the nature of the blessing which Abraham received from him?
 Why mention the fact that he was king of righteousness and also of peace?
 Was Melchizedek actually without father, mother, etc.?
 What is the purpose of this statement regarding him?
 What is the meaning of the statement that he was made "like unto the Son of God"?
 In what sense does Melchizedek abide as priest continually?

The Superior Nature of Melchizedek's Priesthood

What two points are made with regard to his greatness?
 What was Paul's purpose in discussing the tithes in this connection?
 How did taking tithes from Abraham demonstrate Melchizedek's superiority?
 How does all of this show that the priesthood of Melchizedek was greater than that of Aaron?

Both the Levitical Priesthood and the Law had to Be Superseded
 In what way was the priesthood of Levi imperfect?
 What is meant by "perfection"?
 What necessarily followed the change in the priesthood? and why?
 What, then, was the end or aim of the law of Moses? (Rom. 10: 4; Gal. 3: 21, 22)
 Why was it necessary to have a priest who was not of the tribe of Levi?
 From what tribe would the new priest come? and why?
 What is the significance of the expression "hath sprung"?
 How did the people of New Testament times regard Psalm 110?
 What did Paul say is "more abundantly evident"?
 What is the essential difference in the nature of the priesthood of Melchizedek (Christ) and that of Aaron?
 What is meant by the law of a carnal commandment and the power of an endless life?
 What is the meaning of after the "order" of Melchizedek?

Lesson VIII—August 24, 1958

THE BETTER COVENANT

Lesson Text

Heb. 8: 1-13

1 Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is *this*. We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this *high priest* also have somewhat to offer.

4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law;

5 Who serve *that which* is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Mo'-ses 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.

6 But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith,

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

That I will make a new covenant with the house of Is'-ra-el and with the house of Ju'-dah;

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers

In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of E'-gypt;

For they continued not in my covenant,

And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Is'-ra-el

After those days, saith the Lord;

I will put my laws into their mind,

And on their heart also will I write them:

And I will be to them a God,

And they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen,

And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:

For all shall know me.

From the least to the greatest of them.

- 12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities.
And their sins will I remember no more.
13 In that he saith, A new *cove-*

nant, he hath made the first old.
But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“See, *saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount*” (Heb. 8: 5b.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Jer. 31: 31-34.

Daily Bible Readings

August 18.	M.....	A Sacred Covenant (Josh. 9: 18-21)
August 19.	T.....	A Binding Covenant (Ezek. 17: 14-18)
August 20.	W.....	Blood of the Covenant (Ex. 24: 1-8)
August 21.	T.....	Mosaic Law a Covenant (Ex. 34: 1-28)
August 22.	F.....	Covenant with David and His House (2 Sam. 23: 1-5)
August 23.	S.....	A Covenant Including Christ (Psalm 89: 20-37)
August 24.	S.....	The New Covenant (Heb. 12: 18-24)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

One of the great needs of our day is the ability to distinguish between the two covenants which God made with his people. The first was that which is known as the law of Moses, the other is the gospel of Christ. Much of the confusion in the religious world today may be traced to a failure to deal with these two covenants in the manner in which God intended. These two covenants cover two entirely different areas in God's dealings with his people, and they do not overlap each other. This truth must be clearly perceived, if we are to understand the purpose of the covenants.

The first covenant was made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, and was intended to meet all their needs of government and direction as long as it was in force. The ten commandments may be thought of as the Constitution of the theocracy, and all other statutes and ordinances are based upon and are entirely in har-

mony with that Great Code. Many of the requirements of the first covenant pertained to the fleshly state of Israel, and that fact must be kept in mind if we are to understand their meaning.

Paul makes it abundantly clear in Galatians 3: 15; 4: 7 that the Mosaic law was never intended to last forever. It was a kind of “temporary measure” to continue until Christ should come. The law of Moses was intended for one and only one nation; the gospel of Christ is for all men of every nation. But we should always keep in mind the fact that the two covenants cannot be completely isolated from each other, while seeking to grasp their meaning and purpose. Every one who would accurately understand the gospel of Christ must approach it through the old covenant; and he that would discover the full meaning of the Jewish order must make the writers of the New Testament his commentators.

The Golden Text

The Golden Text for today is a part of the passage contained in the

lession text, and we shall consider it when we reach that part.

The Text Explained

Christ Is Our High Priest

(Heb. 8: 1-5)

Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this: We have such a high priest, who sat

down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The reference seems to be to the matters under discussion, with particular emphasis on the priesthood. The “chief

point" is clearly stated—viz., "We have such a high priest," etc. This is the "headstone" of that which has been said; the main proposition which the writer sought to establish. The greatness of this high priest is seen from the fact that he is sitting at God's right hand in the heavens. This is equivalent to saying that he has received the greatest honor which is possible for one to enjoy. (Eph. 1: 20, 21; Phil. 2: 5-11.) The exalted position of Christ as high priest is in keeping with the arguments made in chapter 7.

A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. It will be necessary for one to have a fairly clear picture of the Old Testament tabernacle in order to understand the lesson now before us. Briefly speaking, there were three parts of the old tabernacle, each with a symbolic significance. (1) The outer courts corresponding to the world, (2) the holy place, a type of the church; and (3) the most holy place, a symbol of heaven itself. But it should always be kept in mind that a type or symbol does not always cover every detail of a proposition.

In the case now before us, the term "sanctuary" is the most holy place, or heaven itself. That is where Christ went and that is where he intercedes for his people. In spite of the views of many commentators, who regard the true tabernacle as explanatory of the sanctuary, the "true tabernacle" probably refers to the church. Paul says in Eph. 1: 22 that God gave Christ "to be head over all things to the church." Christ, as high priest, ministers in both the church and heaven, the antitype of the holy and the most holy places of the old tabernacle. Moses "pitched" the tent of the old tabernacle, while the Lord established the church. (Matt. 16: 18.)

For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this high priest also have somewhat to offer. One of the principal functions of a high priest was to offer sacrifices, and Christ himself is no exception to this rule. We are told in Heb. 7:27 that he made the sacrifice "once for all, when he offered up himself," (See also Heb. 9: 12.) It is never neces-

sary for Christ to repeat this offering, but he does make a continual application of it in the salvation of all who "draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7: 25b.)

Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law. It seems that the purpose of this verse is to show the reason for Christ's being in heaven. If he were on the earth he could not function under the law which required all priests to be of the tribe of Levi, that is, the only law which had up to this time been given to govern the ministry of priests and since Christ belonged to the tribe of Judah, he could not, of course, qualify under that law.

The statement, "seeing there are those who offer gifts according to the law," seems to indicate that the law was, still in force, but we know from such passages as Col. 2: 14 that the law was no longer binding on the people who obeyed the gospel (Rom. 6: 15; 7: 6.) It is possible that Paul was simply assuming, for the sake of his argument, that the law was still in force. At any rate, Paul's readers could see that it was necessary for this new high priest to function in another sphere.

Who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, 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. Here Paul gives the true nature of the Levitical priesthood and the law of Moses: they were but a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. This is to say that they themselves depended on the great archetype for their own existence. Something existed in heaven of which the old tabernacle and all of its services were but a copy. That pattern was evidently "the sanctuary, and the true tabernacle [or church, Eph. 1: 3; 2: 6; Heb. 9: 23], which the Lord pitched, not man." This is conclusive evidence of the superiority of the high priesthood of Christ and his ministry over that of those who were after the order of Aaron. It is also further proof of the eternal nature of the church. It existed in the mind

of God when Moses was receiving instruction regarding the building of the tabernacle. (Eph. 3: 8-11.)

The Superiority of His Ministry

(Heb. 8: 6, 7)

But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. The more excellent ministry of Christ, over that of the Levitical priesthood, is due to the fact that his ministry is in a higher sphere—heavenly things; and has to do with the spirit rather than with the flesh. Here again, as in 7:

11, 12, Paul shows that the priesthood and the law which was based upon it are inseparably bound together, so much so that a greater ministry also implies a greater law.

Moses was the mediator of the old covenant (Ex. 20: 19-21; Gal. 3: 19, 20), and it appears that he was succeeded in this position by the high priest. But under the terms of the new covenant Christ, as we gather from Heb. 3: 1, did the work of both Moses and the high priest. The word "mediator" means one who intervenes or goes between two parties as an interpreter, an intercessor, or a reconciler. (1 Tim. 2; 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19.) The better promises of the new covenant are the spiritual promises, which stand in sharp contrast with the fleshly aspect of the old covenant.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. The first covenant was the law given through Moses. The terms "fault" and "faultless" which are used in this chapter do not imply that the law had mistakes in it; that is not the idea which Paul meant to convey. It was faulty in that it was not sufficient to accomplish God's ultimate purpose regarding man. This is the same idea which was advanced in Heb. 7: 11. The law of Moses was never intended as the instrument of man's final salvation. "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law." (Gal. 3: 21; 2: 16, 21; 3: 11; Rom. 3: 20.) The Jews made the mistake of regarding the old law as sufficient to

save Israel according to the flesh. (Rom. 10: 1-4.)

God had a purpose in giving the law of Moses, and there is no intimation in all the Bible that he was disappointed in that purpose. The law separated the Jews from all other people, and it appears that during the time the law was in force God was using the Jews and Gentiles to demonstrate two essential truths: (1) He was allowing the Jews to demonstrate that no one could be saved merely by keeping a law. (Rom. 3: 19, 20.) (2) At the same time he was allowing the Gentiles to demonstrate that natural religion was wholly inadequate for the needs of sinful humanity. (Rom. 2: 11-16.) These two demonstrations issued in two definite results: (1) All men were shut up under sin (Gal. 3: 22; Rom. 3: 9); and (2) in the fullness of time Christ was sent to redeem all who would accept his offer (Gal. 4: 4, 5; 1 John 4: 14.) This leads us to consider the fact that the superior ministry of Christ was

Based upon a Better Covenant

(Heb. 8: 8-13)

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. This section of our lesson should be read in full, along with Jer. 31: 31-34 from which it was quoted. The expression "finding fault with them" means that Jehovah found fault with the people who had the first covenant, that is, with the Israelites. They were continually violating God's law, as may be seen by reading their history. The words "I will make" in the expression "I will make a new covenant" are the translation of a single word in the original, which literally means, to perfect or consummate. The idea is that God would accomplish or conclude a new covenant with his people. This is the covenant of which Christ is the mediator.

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. The last clause of this

verse assigns the reason for annulling the old and perfecting a new covenant. Paul, in this place, clearly affirms that the two covenants are **entirely different from each other**. One pertained largely to the flesh; the other is *concerned* in the main with the spirit. One was entirely removed and the other was put in its place. If the new covenant contains features which are similar to or identical with features of the old covenant, that is due, not to the fact that the latter were brought over to and made a part of the new, but to the fact that both covenants were based upon eternal principles. For example, the command to abstain from murder was not brought over into the new, but the command regarding killing was, in both instances, based upon the eternal principle which makes it wrong to kill. The principle existed before the law of Moses, and it was not affected when the law was abolished.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind. And on their heart also will I write them: And I will be to them a God, And they shall be to me a people. Paul begins here to show something of the essential difference between the two covenants. The basic laws, that is, the ten commandments, of the old covenant were written on tables of stone, and the remainder of the laws were written upon skins or other materials which were used to preserve their records; but in the case of the new covenant, the laws were to be put into their mind and heart, or their desires and moral understanding. The relation between God and his people would be raised to include the end and aim of all religion.

And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, From the least to the greatest of them. Under the old covenant, people were born into covenant-relationship with God, and had to be taught regarding him as they were able to learn; but in the case of the new it is different; those who come to the Lord must be taught first. When Jesus gave the great commission, as recorded by

Matthew, he said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations," and when that was done, they were to baptize the taught "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit;" and then "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." (Matt. 28: 19, 20.)

People have to be taught *about* Jesus first, that is, made acquainted with him and his requirement, before they can be inducted into his kingdom; and then, after they become his people, they must be taught that which he requires those in covenant relationship with him to do. "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6: 44, 45.) The gospel must be heard, believed, and obeyed in order to become a child of God. This specifically excludes infant church membership.

For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more. There appears to be an allusion here to the fact that under the old covenant sins were not entirely forgiven, but were brought to remembrance each year. (Heb. 10: 1-4.) But under the new covenant sins are entirely forgiven and the sinner who accepts the terms of pardon is treated as if he had never sinned. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." (2 Cor. 5: 17.) "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3: 5.) Thus, the individual who was a sinner is, after he obeys the gospel, righteous in the sight of God. This is what Paul calls "reckoned" or "imputed" righteousness in the Roman letter.

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away. The terms "old" and "new" are relative terms, and the very mention of in Jeremiah's day, when the original

one implies the other. Thus, even statement regarding the covenants was made, Jehovah declared the first covenant antiquated. It actually, as a religious institution which was binding upon God's people, passed away when Jesus died upon the cross

(Col. 2: 14), but it appears that as a civil institution it continued until the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

In chapter 7 Paul proved that there was a change in the priesthood, and in chapter 8 he showed that there was a change in the law. (Heb. 7: 12.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of our lesson today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

Why is it so important to be able to distinguish between the two covenants?
Give the purpose and general features of the first covenant.
How were the ten commandments related to the rest of the law of Moses?
How long did God intend for the first covenant to last?
How are the two covenants related to each other?
Can one be understood by a person who is entirely ignorant of the other? Give reasons for your answer.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Christ Is Our High Priest

What were the things which Paul was saying?
What was the "chief point"?
What shows the greatness of the position of Christ as high priest?
What is meant by "a minister of the sanctuary"?
What is the true tabernacle?
In what sense did the Lord "pitch" it?
Give the principal features of the old tabernacle and show their typical import.
What was the high priest appointed to do?
What did Christ as high priest have to offer?
Why wouldn't Christ be a high priest if he were on earth?
What does Paul show regarding the true nature of the Levitical priesthood?
What was the great "archetype"?

What does this show regarding the church?

The Superiority of His Ministry

Why was the ministry of Christ called the more excellent?
What is a mediator?
What feature is emphasized in the "better covenant"?
In what sense was the first covenant faulty?
What then was God's purpose in giving the law of Moses?
What two demonstrations were made during the period of the law?
What two results followed?

Based upon a Better Covenant

With whom did the Lord find fault? and why?
What was the source of Paul's quotation in this section of our lesson?
Why did God make a new covenant?
What is the relation of the two covenants?
Was any of the old brought over and made part of the new? Discuss fully.
Upon what did both covenants rest?
What points of difference did Paul say exist between the covenants?
How were the laws put into the hearts of people?
Why not teach every man his fellow-citizen and his brother?
What order did Jesus give regarding teaching?
What bearing does this have on infant church membership?
What is the principle of forgiveness of sins under the new covenant?
When did Jehovah make the first covenant old?
When did the law of Moses pass away?
What did Paul prove in chapters 7 and 8?

Lesson IX—August 31, 1958

A MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE

Lesson Text

Heb. 9: 11-17, 24-28

11 But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation,

12 Nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been de-

filed, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they

that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it.

17 For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth.

24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us:

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is become old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away*” (Heb. 8: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 9: 1-10, 18-23.

Daily Bible Readings

- August 25. M.....The First Tabernacle (Ex. 33: 7-11)
- August 26. T.....Pattern Revealed to Moses (Ex. 25: 9; 39: 32-43)
- August 27. W.....Dedication of the Tabernacle (Num. 7)
- August 28. T.....Filled with a Cloud of Glory (Ex. 40: 34-38)
- August 29. F.....Symbol of Spiritual Matters (Heb. 8: 1-5)
- August 30. S.....Building of the Church (Matt. 16: 13-20)
- August 31. S.....The General Assembly (Heb. 12: 18-25)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.
PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.
PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The writer of Hebrews devoted the greater part of chapter 7 to the high priesthood of Christ, and chapter 8 to the new and better covenant; and now in chapter 9 he enters into a discussion of the ministry of Christ as high priest under the terms of the new testament or covenant. The aim of the writer was to make known the true significance of Christ and his work, and in so doing to remove from the minds of his readers the suspicion which haunted their thinking, embarrassed their faith, lessened their enjoyment, and lowered their vitality.

The Jews who accepted Jesus as the Christ and the Saviour of the world had problems to solve and difficulties to overcome of which the Gentile Christian knew nothing. Few men have ever been called upon to make a transition so great, and which involved so much obscurity. It is easy for those who can now look back

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own;

26 Else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment;

28 So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.

upon it as an accomplished fact to see that there was no real breach of continuity between the old religion and the new. But that fact was not so easily recognized by the people whose whole life and experience were marked by the turmoil and instability which accompanied the abandonment of old forms, the acceptance of new ideas, and the building upon other foundations.

The ritualism of the Mosaic worship had been before the Hebrew people for centuries and they had been taught that it was authorized by God. But in their worship at the Levitical altar and in the earthly tabernacle, they had failed to see that what they were accustomed to was only a type of something better. It was therefore a great blow to their faith to have the old order abandoned and to accept something, which, to all intents and purposes, as

they viewed the matter, was an entirely new religion. It was new indeed, but it was the very thing which their typical religion had been

pointing toward during all the years of its existence. This is what Paul is endeavoring to get his brethren to see.

The Golden Text

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is become old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away. This statement must be understood in the light of Jeremiah's prediction in Jer. 31: 31-34. Jehovah had said through him that the days were coming when he would make a new covenant with his people, and Paul says that in saying that, he made the first covenant old. The terms "new" and "old," as we observed in our last lesson, are relative terms, and the very mention of one implies the other. The first covenant therefore became old or antiquated from the days of Jeremiah.

It has been repeatedly pointed out in these studies that the law of Moses, as an authoritative religious code, passed away when Jesus died upon the cross. "Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." (Col 2: 14.) God has never had two operat-

ing laws for the same general purpose in force at the same time. This is clearly set forth in Rom. 7: 1-6. People were made free from the law of Moses, so that they might be joined to Christ.

The dullness of the human mind prevented some people from seeing that the law had passed away (2 Cor. 3: 1-18), and so it appears that during the period of transition the Lord, for wise and benevolent reasons, allowed those who failed to see the truth regarding this question to continue the temple worship (Heb. 8: 4; 10: 11) for a time, until they had had ample opportunity to be taught the difference between the old and the new. When Paul said that "that which is become old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away," he probably had reference to the complete destruction of the whole Jewish economy when Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70, which, if our date of this lesson is correct, was only six or seven years away.

The Text Explained

The Ministry of Christ Produces Better Results

(Heb. 9: 11-14)

But Christ having become a high priest of the good things to come. Paul begins here with the fact of Christ's high priesthood, and from that point he advances to show that he accomplished that which the law of Moses was unable to do. The good things to come are those things of the new covenant, which are specified in Heb. 8: 10-12. The writer says in 10: 1 that the law had a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very image of the things. The things which come through the ministry of Christ are sufficient to make us complete in him.

Through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation. There is little doubt but that the more perfect tabernacle is the church, and it is through that sphere of the Lord's

ministry that the good things mentioned above are ours. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1: 3.)

Bible students, generally speaking, have had difficulty with this verse, and especially so since they usually endeavor to make it fit into the imagery of the old tabernacle. The usual explanation runs something like this: As the high priest of the first covenant passed through the holy place into the most holy place, so Christ passed through the greater and more perfect tabernacle on his way to heaven. The result has been that various and sundry explanations as to the meaning of the perfect tabernacle have been advanced. Some hold that the reference was to the glorified body of Christ, his human nature, his holy life, the lower spaces of heaven, the church, etc.

Robert Milligan holds to the idea that the tabernacle here refers to the church and then endeavors to show that the church, prior to Pentecost, was in a kind of "incipient state," and that it was through that that Christ passed. Here is his statement regarding the condition of the church: "But as the covenant concerning Christ was, for a time, in but an incipient state (see notes on ch. 8), so also it was with the house of God (253.)" (Commentary on Hebrews, p. 253.)

There is a measure of truth in Milligan's reasoning, for it is a fact that some of the material out of which the church was made did exist before Pentecost; but the church as a living organism did not become a reality until that day. "The day of Pentecost was the birthday of the Christian church. What existed before in germ then sprang into full being." (Vedder, *Short History of the Baptists*, p. 14.) All of this is true, but this is not under discussion in the text of our lesson today.

To state the matter in another way, there is no foundation in fact for assuming that Christ passed through *anything* on his way to heaven. The following quotation from Vincent seems to cover the point in question: "It is to be said that this local sense of *dia* [through] emphasizes a subordinate point, of which nothing is made in the epistle; which is not even stated. In other words, nothing in the epistle is made to turn on the fact of the high priest's passing through one place in order to reach another. The emphatic point is Christ's entering the heavenly sanctuary. His passing through the heavens (4: 14) or through anything else, is a mere incident having no typical significance."

The idea is that Christ is the high priest of the good things which come through the greater and more perfect tabernacle. Christ is represented as the agent of the good things of the new dispensation. The new sanctuary which is necessary to the high priesthood of Christ is an "accompaniment" of his position and ministry; it is the church, the "institution" through which and in which all spiritual blessings are enjoyed. The church was not made by hands, as was the old tabernacle, and it does

not belong to the natural creation, either in materials or maker. (Eph. 2: 15.)

Nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. The reference here is to the ritual of the great Day of Atonement when the high priest offered the blood of a bullock for his own sins, and the blood of a goat for the sins of the people. (Lev. 16.) After the victims had been slain, the blood was taken by the high priest into the most holy place and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat. This act of offering the blood had to be repeated every year in order to make atonement for sin. But in the case of Christ, he entered heaven itself with his own blood, and by the offering which he made there he obtained eternal redemption for his people, that is, their sins, when once forgiven, would never be brought to remembrance again. It is well to keep in mind that the term "eternal," as used here, carries with it the idea of *quality*, as well as *duration*. The redemption which he obtained is absolute and for ever valid.

For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: The "blood of goats and bulls" and the "ashes of a heifer" cover the entire legal system which provided for the cleanness of the flesh. The first is based on Lev. 16, the second, on Num.

19. The first had reference to sin; the second, to contact with death. Both chapters should be read carefully.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Verses 13 and 14 contain a justification for and an explanation of the statement made in verse 12. The form of Paul's argument is from the lesser to the greater (*a minori ad majus*), and runs something like this: If the blood of animals works cleansing, how much more the blood of Christ? If the blood of animals results in the purity of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ result in

purifying the conscience? (Heb. 10: 1-4.)

The "eternal Spirit" evidently refers to the eternal spirit of Christ (see marginal reading), and not to the Holy Spirit. The sacrifices which he made was with the consent of his own divine personality, and not as the dumb driven animals. The offering which Christ made was the offering of his deepest self: and therein lies the attraction of the cross. The significance and value of the atonement which Christ made is seen in the personal quality and motive of Christ which were back of his sacrifice. This is the key to the doctrine of his atonement. (John 12: 32.)

Only the Death of Christ Could Make the Covenant Valid

(Heb. 9: 15-17)

And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

"This cause" refers to the efficacy of the blood of Christ, that is, because his blood obtained the eternal results, he is the mediator of the new covenant. A mediator stands between estranged parties, and attempts to reconcile them. (1 Tim. 2: 5; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) But Jesus died, not only for sinners who lived during his mediatorial reign, but for those under the first covenant; and what was true of the people of that age was also evidently true of people from Adam onward. This verse gives a clear affirmation that only the blood of Christ could free people from sin in the absolute sense of the term. (Rom. 3: 24-26.) This was necessary in order to enjoy the eternal inheritance. (1 Pet. 1: 4.)

For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. Bible students are hopelessly divided over the meaning of this verse, that is, over the question of whether Paul was referring to a covenant or a testament, a compact or a will. The marginal note says that the word signifies both a covenant and testament. The context seems to indicate that a will was meant and the idea was probably suggested by "the eternal inheritance"

of the preceding verse. If this is true, then the passage must be understood in the sense that the death of Christ was necessary in order to make his will effective.

For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. This principle is well understood by civilized men everywhere; for it is always the testator's privilege to change the terms of his will while he is still alive and in possession of his right mind. But after his death, no change is permitted by law. This is true of a testament, but it is not true of a covenant. A covenant is an agreement between two parties, while a testament is the will of the one who made it, without regard to the beneficiary's will.

The Sacrifice of Christ Was Once for All

(Heb. 9: 24-28)

For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us. Continuing the contrast between high priestly ministry of the old covenant and that of Christ, Paul shows that Christ did not enter into a material tabernacle, which was only a counterpart of the true, but into heaven itself. It was pointed out in chapter 8 that the real pattern was in heaven. The high priest of the old order was not permitted to see God's face, but Christ is in his presence where he continues his intercession for us.

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own. Under the law of Moses, the high priest entered the most holy place each year on the day of atonement, and he always took with him blood that was not his own. The reason for the annual service is clearly stated in Heb. 10: 4: "For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." But inasmuch as the blood of Christ did and does take away sins, that was and is the only sacrifice which is needed. (1 John 1: 6, 7; Rev. 1: 5b.)

Else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages

hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. If Christ's one offering of himself was not eternally efficacious, that is, if it was necessary for him to make periodical offering, which in turn would require periodical sacrifices, then he must have suffered often since creation. This statement was made in view of the affirmation that the blood of Christ had been offered for sins under the old covenant. See verse 15. Sin has been in the world since Adam, and had to be atoned for. The "end of the ages" is literally the "consumation of the ages," or the winding up of all the previous ages, before the age of Christ began. The singular "sin" is significant: Christ dealt with the principle of sin; the sacrifices of the old order dealt with individual transgressions.

And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this

cometh judgment. This statement seems to be an illustration of the truth just stated. The common lot of men is to die only once; they are not permitted to return to earth to compensate for neglect or failure, but instead enter upon the results which follow their life. The term judgment appears to be used in the sense of one's reaping what he sows, and probably also the final day of judgment; for even then the same principle will be followed.

So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation. So Christ, as other men, died but once, and the results will be apparent at his second coming. He will come as a Saviour, not as a sacrifice for sin. His first sacrifice was complete—not to be repeated.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

Give the general setting of this lesson.
What was Paul's general aim in writing Hebrews?
Why was it so difficult for the Jews to accept Christianity?
What had they failed to learn regarding the old order of worship?

The Golden Text

When was the new covenant promised?
How did that make the first covenant old?
When did the law of Moses as a religious code pass away?
What bearing does Rom. 7: 1-6 have on this question?
Why didn't the people see that the old law had passed away?
If the law was taken away at the cross, how was it nigh unto vanishing away when Paul wrote Hebrews?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Ministry of Christ Produces Better Results

What is Paul's starting point in this lesson?
What are the good things to come?
What is the greater and more perfect tabernacle?
What is the significance of the statement, "Through the greater and more perfect tabernacle"?
What application did Paul make regarding the great day of atonement?
What is meant by eternal redemption?
How did Paul bring before his readers the entire legal system for cleansing the flesh?

What was his method of reasoning regarding the blood of Christ?
What is meant by "eternal Spirit"?
Wherein, then, lies the attraction of the cross?

Only the Death of Christ Could Make the Covenant Valid

For what cause is Christ the mediator of a new covenant?
What is a mediator? and what are his duties?
For whom did Christ die? and when were sins actually forgiven?
What was Paul's argument regarding a testament? and why did he make it?
Why must the testator die before his will is effective?
Is this true regarding a covenant? Why?

The Sacrifice for Christ Was Once for All

Where did Christ go for his mediatorial ministry?
How was the material tabernacle related to the true?
What is the significance of "before the face of God"?
Why did the high priest of the old order have to repeat his ministry?
What was Paul's reasoning regarding the single offering of Christ?
If otherwise, why would he often have suffered since the foundation of the world?
What is meant by the end of the ages?
In what way did Christ deal with sin? and why?
Why the statement regarding the death of men and the judgment?
How did this principle apply to Christ?
What will his second coming reveal?
What is meant by "apart from sin" and "unto salvation"?

Lesson X—September 7, 1948

THE LAW A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS

Lesson Text

Heb. 10: 1-10

1 For the law having a shadow of the good *things* to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh.

2 Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices* there is a remembrance made of sins year by year.

4 For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not,

But a body didst thou prepare for me;

6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure:

7 Then said I, Lo, I am come
(In the roll of the book it is written of me)

To do thy will, O God.

8 Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law),

9 Then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Je'-sus Christ once for all.

GOLDEN TEXT: "*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*" (Heb. 10: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING: Heb. 10: 11-39.

Daily Bible Readings

September 1. M..... The Law a Temporary Affair (Jer. 3: 16; Dan. 9: 27)
 September 2. T..... Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law (Matt. 5: 17-20)
 September 3. W..... Law a Tutor to the Jews (Gal. 3: 19-29)
 September 4. T..... Law Nailed to the Cross (Col. 2: 14-23)
 September 5. F..... Veil Over Moses' Face (2 Cor. 3: 7-14)
 September 6. S..... Jews Died to the Law (Rom. 7: 1-6)
 September 7. S..... The Better Way (Heb. 8: 1-13)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

One of the fundamental and remarkable facts concerning the Bible is the typical system which characterizes it. There may have been many reasons for this arrangement, but there are two which seem to be among the most important—namely,

(1) to illustrate and make plain the scheme of human redemption; and
 (2) to secure future generations against the many impostures which have obscured the Lord's will as age after age has rolled by. We may be sure therefore that any system of

religion which lays claim to our faith is not of divine origin, unless it bears the stamp of God's omniscience as seen in its typical co-relation.

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, their history during the wilderness wandering, the great system of law which they received at Sinai, and the subsequent statutes which grew out of it, and their entrance into the land of Canaan are all a type of the salvation which is wrought in and through Christ; and since Christianity, as re-

vealed in the New Testament, is the very complement of the typology of the Old Testament, we know that it must be the religion which has been ordained of God for this age.

It was no accident therefore that the Israelites were placed in the land of Egypt, where they were enslaved, oppressed, and corrupted for their deliverance and subsequent history

furnish one of the clearest types of the salvation made possible by Christ to be found in all the Bible. Our study today is concerned primarily with the law of Moses and its typical import regarding the sacrifice for sin. The ministry of the high priest, both the Levitical and that of Christ, was discussed in the preceding chapter; and now we are to consider its application.

The Golden Text

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. In the preceding verses of the chapter from which the golden text is taken, Paul shows the difference between the continual sacrifices of the Aaronic priests and the one sacrifice which was offered by Christ. Their sacrifices were necessary because they could never take away sins, but Jesus was able to accomplish with one sacrifice that which they were never able to do, that is, he has, by his one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

When it is said that he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified, the idea is that he has laid the foundation for their perfection. There is nothing else which needs to be done to insure man's continued fellowship with God. When the sinner accepts the offer of salvation which the Lord extends to him, all of his guilt is removed and he is declared to be righteous in God's sight, that is, he is treated as if he had never sinned. And then as a result of his relation to Christ he is in position to draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, so that he may receive mercy, and may find grace to help him in time of need. (Heb. 4:

16.) As long as he remains in covenant relationship with God, his every need will be met. (Eph. 1: 3; Phil. 4:

6, 7, 13, 19.) "His one offering gathers up into itself both the sacrifice that inaugurates the covenant, and all the many sacrifices offered year by year to maintain it and to realize it; it reaches the idea which they strove towards in vain, and by reaching it for ever sets them aside." (Davidson.)

The importance of sanctification may be seen by considering Hebrews 12: 14, which says, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." The sanctified are those who have been set aside and consecrated to God, or, to state the same things in other words, those who have obeyed the gospel, that is, they were set apart unto God when they obeyed that form of teaching. They are also declared to be new creatures in Christ Jesus. The process of sanctification must continue as one lives the Christian life. The Lord's people must follow after peace, and they must also follow after sanctification; it is a continuous process.

The Text Explained

The Moral Impotence of the Levitical Sacrifices (Heb. 10: 1-4)

For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things. The first two paragraphs of chapter 10 may be looked upon as a summary of that which has been said in the preceding chapters, but it is more than just a summary; it is a grand finale. The priesthood of Christ has been established and the new law has been

proved to be in effect, and Paul begins now to draw toward the final conclusion and application of these propositions as they affect people today.

In the closing part of chapter 9, the apostle gave the reasons for the one sacrifice of Christ, and the word "for," with which this chapter begins, shows that we are to have a further explanation of that idea. The law, says Paul, contained only a shadow, an indefinite and unsubstantial out-

line of the good things promised in the new covenant; and it stands in sharp contrast with the *form* of them as expressed in the gospel system.

Can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. The ineffectiveness of the law was fully demonstrated by the continuous sacrifices which were offered year by year. No amount of repetition of the shadow can ever equal the substance. The law simply had no power to remove sin in the absolute. The term "perfect" is used in the sense of fully meeting the needs of men with reference to justification and sanctification.

Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. Every informed Jew knew that the yearly sacrifices were offered for the same sins, and Paul's question is, If the sins were forgiven, why the continuous sacrifice? Surely the sacrifices for sins which were forgiven would cease. But the very fact of the sacrifice proves the existence of the guilt.

But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. Sacrifices for sins were made for the people all during the year, that is, special sacrifices for special sins; but on the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of atonement, all the sins of the past were called to mind or remembered. This is what people sometimes call rolling sins forward; but it is better to use the language of the Bible. The fact that sins were annually remembered shows that they had not been sufficiently atoned for by any past sacrifice. (Num. 5: 15.)

For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. This is a statement of fact, and as such it needs no proof further than the affirmation of inspiration. Whatever may be said regarding this question is not proof; it is only an effort to enable frail man to grasp the idea. There is no connection between the physical blood of animals and the moral offence of man, and no amount of the former could remove the guilt of the latter. (Mic. 6: 6-8.)

Scriptural Proof of Their Defective Character (Heb. 10: 5-7)

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, But a body didst thou prepare for me. This quotation is from the fortieth Psalm, verses 6-8. The entire psalm is not regarded as messianic, but the part quoted is, that is, it is applied to the mission of Christ. The whole psalm is a sacrifice of praise and a prayer for help. Its first application was to David, its author; and then secondarily to Christ. There are some textual problems connected with the passage, but we shall not discuss them here. The point which we need to remember is that animal sacrifices were never intended by God to atone for sin, and so, in his providence he prepared a body for the Messiah so that he could be offered as the effective sacrifice for sin.

In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure. This statement must be understood in the light of Jehovah's ultimate purpose. He authorized the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, and he would have been displeased with his people had they refused or even neglected to offer them. But when they are compared with the higher aim of God, obedience is greater than sacrifice. "And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15: 22.) Animal sacrifices could never, as indeed they were never intended to, take away sin; their power was solely in their typical import.

Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God. The words which are here quoted were the words of David, but they are made to apply to Christ, prophetically. It is as if David said, and also and particularly Christ, "Inasmuch as the animal sacrifices are impotent to remove sins, I am come to accomplish that which they could not do—I am come to do thy will." In ancient time the law was written on skins and rolled up on two wooden rollers. One roller was placed at either end

of the parchment, and then the two were rolled toward each other. When any one desired to read any portion of the "book," he could find the place by unrolling one end, while rolling up the other. (Ezek. 2: 9.) The roll of the book mentioned here was probably the law of Moses. This particular quotation is not found in any part of the Pentateuch, but when it is remembered that the words are applied to Jesus, it is easy to see that that is the spirit of the Old Testament books.

The Finality of the Sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10: 8-10)

Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law). In this part of the lesson, Paul proceeds to explain and apply the quotation which he has just made from David. "Saying above" refers to that quotation. It should be observed that Paul does not quote the passage verbatim, and he applies it only to Christ. This was done, no doubt, because that was the ultimate meaning of the passage; and the apostle's application is worded so as to bring out the meaning of the original statement. The application is worded in such a manner as to cover the whole system of sacrifices, and the writer shows, parenthetically, that they were all according to the law of Moses.

Then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. This statement is put in contrast with the preceding one. After showing that all of the sacrifices of the law could not atone for sin, then comes the statement regarding the mission of Christ, namely, "I am come to do, as thou hast willed, that which the law could not do." It was never God's will that sin should be removed by the blood of animals, but it was his will that it should be removed by the sacrifice of his Son.

He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. The "first" and "second" refer to the two contrasting statements made above. The first was the whole system of Levitical sacrifices, that which could never please God ultimately. They were intended only for a time, until the perfect sacrifice should be offered.

The law or the whole legal system, argues Paul, has fulfilled its purpose, and has been removed so that the better arrangement can be made.

The second thing which he established is the perfect will of God as expressed in Christ. He removes that which he does not will, the animal sacrifices, so that he may establish that which he does will, namely, the offering of an obedient will. This, as Milligan points out, is made clear by the abstract neutrals—"the first" and "the second"—and by that which follows in verse 10. The whole question hinges on two sacrifices, the blood of animals and the obedient will of Christ.

By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. This, as already indicated, is further proof that the "second" thing which was established was the obedient will of Christ, or, to state the matter in other words, the will of God as fulfilled in Christ. The Lord Jesus did not yield to God's will because he was compelled to, but because it was also his will. "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but

I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father." (John 10: 17, 18.) His sacrifice was therefore no less his own will than God's will. He and the Father were one in this respect.

It was the offering of the body of Christ, as the expression of the perfect will of God, which resulted in or made possible our sanctification. Had it not been for this great sacrifice no one could have had access to the Father in the complete forgiveness of his sins. This is the inspired explanation regarding the fleshly birth of Jesus. This is the divine reason for the death of Christ.

Inasmuch as two of the greatest questions of the New Testament (the *will of God* and the *blood of Christ*) are involved in this lesson, it seems fitting that a little more should be said about them. It was through the will of God and Christ that our redemption and sanctification were made possible, and it is not surprising that emphasis is placed on this

subject throughout the New Testament. We must do God's will, and we must will to do it, if we are to be saved. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21; John 7: 17; 2 Cor. 5: 9; 1 John 2: 17.)

There is no greater truth, nor one in which people who desire salvation from sin are more interested, than that which affirms that we are saved by the blood of Christ. (Eph. 1: 7; 1 John 1: 6, 7.) No one who professes to believe the Bible as the inspired word of God will deny the fact that the blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of sins.

But while we all believe that great truth, we are sometimes greatly confused when we are confronted with the further fact that the salvation which is made possible by the blood of Christ is a conditional salvation. It is seemingly very difficult for some to understand how it is that Christ died for the sins of all men, and yet at the same time there is something which the individual sinner must do before he can have the forgiveness of his sins. Such people fail to see that there is a direct relationship between the atonement, on the one

hand, and conditional salvation, on the other.

Remission of sins has always depended upon the shedding of blood. We may not always be able to understand why this is so, but we can all know that this is the plain and emphatic teaching of the Scriptures. "And apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22b.) The shedding of blood is equivalent to taking life; and since the sinner was doomed to die (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6: 23), the only way for him to be saved was for another life to be given for his.

When man sinned in the beginning he forfeited his life and was sentenced to die, both he and all who followed him. (Rom. 5: 12.) But when Jesus sacrificed his own sinless life (2 Cor. 5: 21) he satisfied the demands of the law which had been violated, and thereby made it possible for man to live. But if man's life is saved through the blood of Jesus, then Jesus is entitled to that life; and it is clearly taught in the New Testament that no one can approach God except through and by virtue of the blood by which he was redeemed. *He must come to God as a servant of Jesus Christ.*

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What emphasis is placed upon the typical system of the Bible?
What two important reasons are given for the typology of the Scriptures?
What great types are involved in this lesson?
How is Christianity related to the types of the Old Testament?
Discuss the design of the bondage and deliverance of Israel with respect to our salvation.

The Golden Text

What is placed in contrast with the one offering of Christ?
What does the term "perfected" mean, as used in the Golden Text?
What does "sanctification" mean? and what of its importance?
How are people sanctified?
Is sanctification a single act or a continuous process? Give reasons for your answer.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Moral Impotence of the Levitical Sacrifices

Discuss the setting of this text with reference to the preceding part of Hebrews.
What is meant by "a shadow of the good things to come"?

What demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the Levitical sacrifices?

When do people cease to be conscious of sin?

Why were sins remembered each year under the old law? and when was it done?

Why do people speak of this as "rolling sins forward"? Is this correct?

Why was it impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin?

Scriptural Proof of Defective Character

From what part of the Bible did Paul quote? and why?

Why was a body prepared for Jesus?

Why didn't God have pleasure in animal sacrifices?

Did he want his people under Moses to offer them?

What does the Bible say is greater than sacrifice? and why is this true?

Why did Christ come to the earth?

What was meant by the "roll of the book"? and what book?

The Finality of the Sacrifice of Christ

Why didn't Paul quote the passage verbatim?

Why say that the sacrifices were offered according to the law?

What is meant by saying that Christ came to do God's will?

He taketh away the first what, that he might establish the second what?
 By what will have we been sanctified? and how was it made possible?
 Was Christ compelled to die for the sins of the world? Give reasons for your answer.
 What emphasis is placed upon the will of God in the Scriptures?
 Why is it essential that our will blend into God's will?

What place does the blood of Christ have in the plan of salvation?
 How could he die for all men and yet salvation be conditional?
 Why was the shedding of blood necessary for remission?
 Why did an innocent person have to die for the guilty?
 In what way must all men go to God? and why?

Lesson XI—September 14, 1958

EXAMPLES OF FAITH

Lesson Text

Heb. 11: 4-10, 25-30

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith E'-noch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God:

6 And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of *God* concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he became a sojourner

in the land of promise, as in a *land* not his own, dwelling in tents, with i'-saac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

25 Choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of E'-gypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward.

27 By faith he forsook E'-gypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the E-gyp'-tians assaying to do were swallowed up.

30 By faith, the walls of Jer-i-chō fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days.

Golden Text: "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING: Heb. 11: 32-40.

Daily Bible Readings

September 8. M..... Abraham's Faith (Gen. 12: 1-4; 22: 1-10)
 September 9. T..... Noah's Faith (Gen. 6: 14-22)
 September 10. W..... Joseph's Faith (Gen. 50: 1-20)
 September 11. T..... Jochebed's Faith (Ex. 2: 1-10)
 September 12. F..... Daniel's Faith (Dan. 6)
 September 13. S..... The Unbeliever Condemned (John 3: 14-18)
 September 14. S..... Faith, without Works; Dead (James 2: 1-26)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The only adequate answer to pessimism regarding the entire human enterprise is a vital faith in God. When faith in God, in spiritual reality and divine purpose, leaves us or is absent from us for any reason, chaos is our inevitable lot. Unless man has faith in something beyond himself, he can have no real confidence in himself.

Notwithstanding these obvious facts, there are people today who do not have either the time or the desire to provide for themselves this divine formula which, more than anything else in the world, is able to help them meet successfully all the difficulties and obstacles incident to this life. Jesus came into the world in order to help men believe in God, and to live in the confidence and strength and final peace of such a faith.

The world in which we must live is a sinful world; and it matters not

which way one may turn, he will always be confronted with obstacles to righteousness. No one lives in this world very long before he learns that he cannot always get that which he wants. He will certainly meet with opposition and many of his plans will be overthrown. If he seeks to do right he will soon realize that the world is not altogether in the hands of God. There are, to be sure, good people and good institutions in the world; but there are also bad people and bad institutions. This condition inevitably leads the thoughtful to wonder which of these two seems to be gaining the victory. With the struggle between right and wrong continually gaining momentum as one's experience with life widens, he will realize that he must have help from a higher source, if he is to gain the final victory. This is the part that faith plays in his life.

The Golden Text

Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. When one realizes something of the importance of faith, he naturally wants to know what faith is. Edward Robinson translated this passage as follows: "Faith is confidence as to things hoped for; conviction as to things not seen." Faith may be compared to a substance which is composed of two elements, namely, confidence and conviction, and they both must be present in order for faith to exist. One has conviction when he is convinced regarding things not seen, and he has confidence with reference to things for which he hopes.

He who walks by faith walks by the guidance of another. He has not traveled that road before, and does not himself know the way. He cannot walk by sight, but, having absolute confidence in the one whom he relies upon to lead him, he is able to walk by faith. Faith apprehends as a real fact that which is not re-

vealed to the senses. It relies upon that fact, acts upon it, and is upheld by it in the face of all that seems to contradict it. Faith is an assent to truths made credible by the testimony of God's word; and it is convinced regarding and trusts in that which it does not see.

The chapter from which our lesson for today is taken gives the basic New Testament teaching on faith, both with reference to its definition and application; and it will be seen in the study of this chapter that faith is more than mere intellectual assent. It is trust in God which leads to unquestioned obedience to his will; and without obedience there is no real faith. (John 3: 36; James 2: 22.) The faith which pleases God is belief which has been reduced to a way of living. Even the doing of that which God commands is not acceptable, unless the action is the result of faith. This idea will be further discussed in the text of the lesson, as examples of faith are presented.

The Text Explained

Some Antediluvian Examples of Faith

(Heb. 11: 4-7)

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. The expression "a more excellent" is the translation of a single Greek word—*pleiona* (*pleiōn*) the comparative of *polus*, the primary meaning of which is *much*. The term *pleiōn* occurs in the New Testament more than fifty times, but it is nowhere else translated as it is in Heb. 11: 4. For a similar use of the word see Matt. 12: 41, 42; Mark 12: 33; Luke 12: 23; Heb. 3: 3.

If the facts of the record of Cain and Abel's offerings and the New Testament's use of the word *pleiōn* are considered together, it will be seen that the superior quality of Abel's offering was due to the fact that it was a fuller and more complete sacrifice, that is, it included all that God required or commanded. This is the view of Thayer, Young, et al.

Through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh. The word "which" probably refers to Abel's faith, although it is possible that reference is to his sacrifice. In either case God looked with favor upon both Abel and his gifts. It is well to note the plural "gifts" which seems to confirm the idea that Abel's offering was a fuller or more complete sacrifice than that of Cain. The facts seem to indicate that he offered only a part of that which Jehovah had commanded, while Abel brought all that Jehovah required. This is the idea which the term "gifts" seems to confirm. Thus, as the passage affirms, the excellent character of Abel's faith was illustrated in two particulars: (1) it prompted him to offer a fuller and more acceptable sacrifice, and (2) it was by faith it found for him a place in God's estimation even after his death—his faith is still speaking through the inspired record. (Gen. 4: 1-8; Rom. 15: 4.)

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated

him. The expression "that he should not see death" could signify either the purpose of his translation or its results—that he might be spared the ordeal of death or so that he did not see death. The term "translated" means that he was removed from earth to heaven. "He was not found" suggests that his contemporaries missed him, sought for him, but were unable to find him.

For he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God. God bore witness to Enoch just as he did in the case of Abel. The latter's faith was manifested in his offerings, while Enoch's faith is seen in his walking with God (Gen. 5: 21-24), which is interpreted by Paul to mean that he was well-pleasing to God. "Walking with God" is frequently used throughout the Bible to represent a religious life.

And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him. This verse illustrates that which is necessary in order to be well-pleasing to God, as suggested in the case of Enoch, and it also verifies the description of faith which was given in verse 1, the golden text of today's lesson. To believe that God is means that we are convinced that he does exist, while to believe that he rewards them that seek after him implies that we have confidence in that which he says. Conviction and confidence are both essential, if we are to please God.

By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. The warning of things not seen as yet required conviction on the part of Noah, and he, accordingly, was moved with godly fear, that is, with pious reverence, to do that which God commanded him. (Gen. 6: 13-22.) Noah's faith was strong enough to move him to do as he was commanded, and that is the strength of faith which is necessary to save or to be well-pleasing to God. Does any one think that Noah would have been saved if he had refused to do that which God

told him to do? One may search the entire Bible through, but he will not find any other principle upon which men may be saved. Each individual must believe God, and then do that which he tells him to do.

Through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. This probably means that Noah's faith led him to obey God and at the same time pronounced, as it were, the destiny of those who disobeyed him. Peter (2 Pet. 2: 5) calls Noah a preacher of righteousness, and it is certain that he also condemned the antediluvians by word of mouth as well as by his faithful conduct.

The Faith of Abraham (Heb. 11: 8-10)

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. We should keep in mind the fact that the examples of faith which are given in this chapter are to illustrate that which was said in verse 1, namely, things hoped for and things not seen. Both ideas are involved in the example of Abraham. He hoped for the inheritance, but he did not see it; for he did not even know where he was going.

The scriptural account of Abraham's call may be learned from the latter part of Gen. 11 and the first part of chapter 12, and also from Stephen's speech in the first part of Acts 7. The call of Abraham did not contain an attractive description of the country to which he was going, and the only motive which prompted his obedience was his faith in the promise of God. When God spoke, that was enough for him. Paul makes it plain in Rom. 4 that the faith which saves today is the kind which Abraham manifested. That patriarch believed anything which God said, regardless of the circumstances under which it was spoken, and he endeavored to do everything which God commanded him, regardless of the cost or the difficulty in doing it.

By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. Abraham lived in the

land which had been promised to him as if it belonged to some one else. He made no effort to make a permanent settlement, even with the presence of his son and grandson, but continued to live in tents and to shift from place to place, as did Isaac and Jacob who were heirs of the same promise, because there was no word from God to indicate that they should do otherwise. All three of the patriarchs are mentioned here, doubtless, because they cover the entire period of the sojourn in Canaan. Faith inspired them to endure patiently their unsettled life, since it assured them of a permanent home in the future.

For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. This verse assigns the reason why Abraham was contented to live as if the country had not been promised to him; he was looking beyond the earthly inheritance. He was looking for a permanent home, a city with foundations, whose architect (see margin) and maker is God. It was faith like this which demonstrated his confidence with reference to things hoped for and his conviction with reference to things not seen.

There is a lesson here for us too. Too often we become engrossed in the affairs of this life to the extent that it looks as if we expect to make this world our eternal home. We are as much sojourners in this life, as were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the land of Canaan. "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2: 11, 12.) "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3: 20.)

The Case of Moses

Choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The facts concerning the life of Moses, so far as this lesson goes, may be learned by reading the first few chapters of Exodus and Stephen's

reference to him in the seventh chapter of Acts. The writer of Hebrews introduces this section of his life's history with these words: "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." His refusal to be thus identified with the royal household was based on faith, and he rejected one thing so that he might accept another. A life which is pleasing to God does not consist solely in negatives; we must refuse to do wrong in order that we may do right, even if the result of the choice involves us in suffering. Such suffering is only temporary, but the reward of faith is eternal.

Accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. The ability of Moses to make the proper choices in life was based on his faith in God. That faith gave substance to the things hoped for because it rested on God's word and not man's. This enabled him to reject present pleasures and treasures and look to the future. He had a clear eye for distinguishing right from wrong, and he did not let the fact that he had been reared as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, or the example of Joseph's remaining in Egypt and serving his people, influence him; God was calling *him*, and his own duty must be considered apart from that of any one else. This is a very valuable lesson for us today; for God speaks to each one of us through his word, just as surely as he spoke to Moses in the long ago. We should learn to distinguish between the things which belong only to time, and the things which belong to the reward of faith. If we stand by Moses in Egypt, his choice may seem foolish and absurd; but when we stand by the glorified Moses on the mount of transfiguration, we know that it was the only wise one for him to make. No one at

the end of the way ever regrets having done right.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Bible students are not agreed as to which forsaking of Egypt is referred to here, but that is of little consequence, so far as the lesson is concerned. It is, perhaps, more natural to think of his flight into Midian, but it could have been when he left Egypt with the host of Israel to go into the wilderness. In either case, his faith enabled him to see him who is invisible.

By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them. The history of the origin of the passover is found in Ex. 12, and the fact that it was instituted prior to that which it commemorated shows that it was based entirely on faith—"a conviction of things not seen."

By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up. (Ex. 14 and 1 Cor. 10: 1, 2.) The action of the Israelites is an impressive example of the saving efficacy of faith, just as that of the Egyptians is a striking illustration of the ruinous effects of a lack of faith. The same principle holds good today. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days.* (Josh. 6: 1-21.) John tells us that our faith is the victory which overcomes the world (1 John 5: 4), and all the examples of faith which we have considered in this lesson are illustrations of how the principle works. Faith indeed is confidence as to things hoped for; and convictions as to things not seen. We should always remember that no one can please God who does not believe that he is, and that he rewards those who seek after him.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of our lesson today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What place does faith occupy in the Christian life?

How do you account for the indifferent attitude of many regarding faith?

Why is it so necessary for one to have

faith in God?

The Golden Text

What happens when one realizes the importance of faith?

How is faith described or defined in the golden text?

What does it mean for one to walk by faith?

How are faith and obedience related?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Some Antediluvian Examples of Faith

Under what conditions did Abel manifest his faith?

In what sense was his sacrifice "a more excellent" one?

How did his sacrifice compare with Cain's?

What was God's estimate of Abel and his offering?

How "being dead yet speaketh"?

Who was Enoch and what happened to him?

What testimony was borne to him prior to his translation?

How did Enoch manifest his faith in Jehovah?

What does it mean for one to walk, with God?

Why is it impossible to please God without faith?

What two things must be believed by those who come to God?

Explain the meaning of conviction and confidence.

What warning did Jehovah give to Noah?

In what way was he affected by the warning?

Is it always necessary for one's faith to move him? and if so, in what direction?

Upon what principle are all men saved?

Explain fully.

How did Noah condemn the world?

The Faith of Abraham

What is the purpose of the examples of

faith which are given in Heb. 11?

Where was Abraham when he was called? and what was he told to do?

How did he manifest his faith in God?

How did his sojourning in the land of Canaan demonstrate his faith?

What motive prompted him in this action?

In what sense are Christians sojourners and pilgrims?

In what sense is our citizenship in heaven? Give reasons for your answer.

The Case of Moses

Why did Moses refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter?

What choice did he make? and why?

What motive prompted him in making this choice?

How was he able to distinguish between the temporary and the eternal?

In what way does this lesson apply to us?

Why wasn't he afraid of the king of Egypt when he forsook that country?

How did he see him who is invisible?

What was the passover? and how did Moses keep it?

What is suggested by the fact that it was instituted prior to that which it commemorated?

What lesson of faith do we learn from the crossing of the Red sea?

How was it by faith that the walls of Jericho fell down?

How is our faith the victory that overcomes the world?

Lesson XII—September 21, 1958

THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN

Lesson Text

Heb. 12: 18-29

18 For ye are not come unto *a mount* that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them;

20 For they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned;

21 And so fearful was the appearance, *that* Mo'-ses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:

22 But ye are come unto mount Zi-ón, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Je-ru'-sa-lem, and to innumerable hosts of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Je'-sus the mediator of

a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than *that of* Abel.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused him that warned *them* on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape* who turn away from him that *warneth* from heaven:

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven.

27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

GOLDEN TEXT: *Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.*" (Heb. 12: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING: Heb. 12: 1-17.

Daily Bible Readings

September 15. M.....	God Inhabits Eternity (Isa. 57: 1-15)
September 16. T.....	God Rules Eternity (Jer. 10: 1-10)
September 17.	W. Eternity of God's Name (Psalm 72: 1-17)
September 18. T.....	God from Everlasting (Psalm 90)
September 19. F.....	Unfailing Promises (Psalm 121: 3-8)
September 20. S.....	Mount Zion Cannot Be Removed (Psalm 125: 1-3)
September 21. S.....	New Heaven and Earth (Isa. 65: 17-25)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The expression "things which cannot be shaken" implies that there are some things which can be shaken; and it is the contrast between the two sets of things, with particular emphasis upon the former, that our lesson for today is concerned. Paul has, all through the epistle to the Hebrews, been showing that the old order had to give way to the new; and the closing part of the twelfth chapter, which is our lesson for today, forms the climax to his reasoning. The elaborate system of Judaism which had claimed the devotion and service of the Hebrew people through fifteen hundred years, must now give place to the church which Christ, as God's final spokesman to our race, came to establish.

The time element is very important in this study. It has been repeatedly pointed out that the law of Moses, as a binding religious code, passed away when Jesus died on the cross; but for wise and benevolent reasons the old order was allowed to remain until sufficient teaching could be done to show the difference between the two, before it was completely destroyed. This may be open to question. The *end* perhaps was *definite*. But God was *patient* as people *slowly* learned *the truth*. The inspired writer of Hebrews saw the day of destruction coming, and, apparently, made several references to it. (Heb.

10: 25, 37.) The coming One was evidently Christ himself, not his personal coming to judge the world at the end of time, but his *providential* coming for the destruction of Jerusalem and the removal of the Jewish commonwealth. (Matt. 24: 29-34.) Hebrews was written some six or seven years before the day of destruction came.

That which cannot be shaken refers particularly to the kingdom of Christ. Judaism passed away, but the church of Christ will continue as long as time shall last. There are many references to this fact scattered throughout the Bible, and they are intended to emphasize the enduring nature of the work of Christ. Three of these references are listed here: "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*" (Dan. 2: 44.) "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; *and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*" (Matt. 16: 18.) "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom *that cannot be shaken*, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12: 28, 29.)

The Golden Text

Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord. There are two great propositions which belong

to the Christian life set forth in the passage which serves as our golden text today. They are (1) the necessity of being at peace with all men,

and (2) the necessity of personal consecration to God. These requirements are emphasized throughout the New Testament, and it is most essential that they be impressed upon the minds of all the Lord's people today. People cannot hope to live with God and the redeemed in heaven on any other basis.

The original word for "follow" means to pursue, strive for, seek after, aspire to (Arndt and Gingrich.) This indicates that there must be a determined effort made on the part of the Lord's people to bring about this peaceful condition. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God." (Matt. 5: 9.) A peacemaker is not only a peaceful person; he is also one who strives to bring about peace between others. Peter exhorts the brethren to seek peace, and pursue it. (1 Pet. 3: lib.) Paul says, "So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." (Rom. 14: 19.) And again, "If it be possible, *as much as in you lieth*, be at peace with all men." (Rom. 12: 18.) This is to say, if we are not at peace with others, it should not be our fault.

The Text Explained

The Superior Privileges of the New Covenant

(Heb. 12: 18-24)

For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. It has already been pointed out in these studies that Paul's purpose in writing Hebrews was to warn the Jewish Christians against the danger of apostasy which confronted them, and to lead them back to a closer walk with and greater devotion to God. The preceding paragraph of chapter 12 was devoted to warnings and exhortations, and the "for" with which this lesson begins shows that there is a connection between the two sections. The first division of our lesson for today shows something of the Christian birthright and the Christian citizenship which the people of this age enjoy in Christ, in contrast with those under the old covenant.

The contrast between the two covenants which as here presented is very impressive, and the whole idea is to

A person is sanctified, in the Bible sense of the term, when he is set apart or consecrated to the service of God. This process begins when he obeys the gospel: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.) Sanctification, however, is not something which people get at one time, and then have no further need to be concerned about it; they are to continue to strive for, pursue, or seek after the sanctification "without which no man shall see the Lord." This is substantially what Jesus meant when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5: 8.) This condition can only be brought about by the word of God: "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified." (Acts 20: 32.)

show that the new has so many more features which are designed to draw people to Christ and bind them together in his service. The main features of the old covenant were awe inspiring, while those under the new are adapted to draw people closer to God. The description which is given in this verse is that of mount Sinai at the time of the giving of the law, and the Old Testament record of it is found in Ex. 19: 7-25. This passage should be carefully read.

And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them. The sound of the trumpet which they heard was the signal to call them to assemble at the mount, and its continued sounding in the midst of the tempest was calculated to increase the terror of the scene. "And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." (Ex. 19: 19.) The majestic voice of God, in the midst of the terrifying sights

and sounds, caused the people to fear greatly; and they besought Moses that they might be addressed by his familiar voice, instead of the voice of Jehovah.

For they could not endure that which was enjoined. If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned. This assigns the reason for their request that they be allowed to hear only the voice of Moses. To touch the mountain was to profane it, whether it be by man or beast. (Ex. 19: 12, 13.) In saying that they could not endure that which was enjoined, the idea is not that judgment must stand or fall, is the great Center of the realities to which his people have been introduced; and he will allot, without appeal, each soul to its own destiny. Those who are faithful to Christ have nothing to fear; for he has promised to confess their names before the Father and the holy angels. (Matt. 10: 32, 33.) The spirits of just men made perfect probably includes all who have died in God's favor since Abel. (Heb. 11: 40.)

And so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. There is no statement in Exodus from which Paul quoted, but, as in the case of Acts 20: 35, he supplied the information as an inspired apostle. (Deut. 9: 19.) There is nothing incredible about Paul's being able to supply such power to his apostles. (John 14: 26; 16: 13; 1 Cor. 2: 13.)

But ye are come unto mount Zion,

and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. In this verse Paul begins to describe in contrast the lot of Christians with that of the Jews under the law of Moses. Instead of going to the literal mountain and city, those in Christ are brought into fellowship with eternal realities. "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3: 20.) All of the terms used in this verse of our lesson today apparently stand for the meeting-place of God and his people—where God manifests his presence and where his people dwell. (Eph. 2: 19-22.)

And to innumerable hosts of angels,

to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven. After having named the place, the apostle begins now to tell who are there. He mentions first an innumerable host of angels and saints in a joyful convocation. (The original word for "general assembly" means a *festive gathering*.) The "church of the firstborn" means the

church of the Lord, or those people who have not parted with their birthright, but have retained the privileges of the firstborn; and they are enrolled in heaven. (Phil. 4: 3.) This figure is no doubt based on the well-known practice of city officials inscribing the names of all the citizens on tables or scrolls. This festive gathering is in sharp contrast with the awful scenes of Sinai.

And to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. God, the ultimate Judge of all, ~~idea is not that judgment~~ all must stand or fall, is the great Center of the realities to which his people have been introduced; and he will allot, without appeal, each soul to its own destiny. Those who are faithful to Christ have nothing to fear; for he has promised to confess their names before the Father and the holy angels. (Matt. 10: 32, 33.) The spirits of just men made perfect probably includes all who have died in God's favor since Abel. (Heb. 11: 40.)

And to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel. In speaking of Jesus as the mediator of a new covenant, Albert Barnes says that "this was the crowning excellence of the new dispensation in contradistinction from the old. They had been made acquainted with the true Messiah; they were united to him by faith; they had been sprinkled by his blood." The sprinkling of blood probably has reference to the ratification of the covenant and the method by which Christians are freed from an evil conscience. (Heb. 9: 14-26; 10: 19-22.)

Bible students are not agreed regarding the contrast between Christ and Abel. Some hold that Abel proclaimed that God in some way would provide for the salvation of men; but that when Christ came and offered his sacrifice, the way was made plain. Others see a contrast between the blood of Abel (Gen. 4: 10) crying for vengeance, and the blood of Christ crying for mercy. The latter idea, in view of the general context, seems more reasonable.

**Sovereign Authority
Must Be Respected**

(Heb. 12: 25, 26)

See that ye refuse not him that

speakeeth. Paul made it plain in the very first part of Hebrews that God speaks today through his Son. He formerly spoke through the prophets, when he addressed his people of the old dispensation; but now his message comes through his Son, his final spokesman to the human race while time lasts.

For if they escaped not when they refused him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from him that warneth from heaven. The contrast here is between Moses and Jesus. God spoke through Moses at Sinai, and he speaks through Christ today. The Old Testament record makes it plain, as does Paul's statement here, that those who refused to hear Moses did not escape punishment; and the conclusion is even more certain that the people of the new dispensation will not escape, if they refuse to hear Jesus. (Heb. 2: 1-3; 10: 28-31; Luke 10: 16.)

Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. This quotation regarding the shaking of earth and heaven is taken from Hag. 2: 6, probably the Septuagint Version, which was in common use during the days of Christ and the apostles. The shaking of the earth took place when Jehovah spoke from Sinai (Ex. 19: 18; Psalm 68: 7, 8), but it appears that the shaking of the heaven refers to the revolutions which resulted from the coming of Christ. Read the full context in Haggai. The extent of the shaking is signified in the next section of our lesson.

The Enduring: Nature of the Kingdom (Heb. 12: 27-29)

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. The expression "Yet once more" indicates the finality of this predicted manifestation of God—for the last time. The shaking of the heaven would demonstrate two things, namely, (1) the removal of some things; (2) the endurance of some things. The shaking, as predicted by

Haggai, as already pointed out, referred to the changes which would take place when Christ removed the old order and established the new. All that was typical and preparatory would be destroyed, and the new would be inaugurated.

The New Testament seems to teach that the "shaking" which would take place under Christ will continue until "the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." (Rev. 11: 15.) Paul says, "For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did not subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15: 25-28.) This work of Christ can be completed only when all opposition to his reign has been destroyed. "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; *when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power.*" (1 Cor. 15: 24; Eph. 6: 10-12.)

Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe. The exhortation contained in this verse is based on the fact that we Christians have received a kingdom which cannot be shaken, as the old Jewish economy and other institutions and standards were. This is the kingdom which Daniel said would never be destroyed; it is the church against which Christ declared the gates of Hades shall not prevail, that is, gain the ascendancy or win a victory over (Arndt and Gingrich); overcome, meaning, "not even the gates of Hades—than which nothing was supposed to be stronger—shall surpass the church in strength" (Thayer). The literal reading in Matthew is "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against *her*," that is, the church (feminine gender).

The expression "let us have grace" is usually understood to mean, Let us gratefully accept all that which

God has so graciously provided for us, so that we may offer service which is well-pleasing to him with reverent awe (thereby watching against that which is displeasing to God) and fear. Or, reverent caution, lest we offend God, and fear lest we bring destruction upon ourselves.

For our God is a consuming fire.

We should also remember that the God in whom we hope is also one to be feared. He is a God of mercy and he is also a God of punitive righteousness. He has provided all the blessings and privileges of the unshakable kingdom, and his anger will burn against all who reject them. (Deut. 4: 24; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9; Heb. 10: 27-31.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What is implied by the expression "things which cannot be shaken"?
How does this lesson fit into Paul's general plan for the Book of Hebrews?
Why is the time element important to this lesson?
What day did Paul frequently refer to in the epistle?
What would remain unshaken?

The Golden Text

What two propositions are set forth in the golden text?
What is the meaning and significance of the term "follow"?
How many people follow after peace?
If we are not at peace with others, whose fault should it be? Why?
What does the word sanctify mean?
How and when are people sanctified today?
What does it mean to follow after sanctification?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Superior Privileges of the New Covenant

What was Paul's principal purpose in writing Hebrews?
What is the force of "for" in the beginning of this verse?
What principal points of contrast between the two covenants is pointed out? and why was the contrast given?
What was it that the people of the old order could not endure?

How did Paul know about the manner in which Moses was affected?
To what did Paul say that Christians have come?
What is the purpose of this meeting and who are there?
What is the church of the firstborn?
How does the blood of sprinkling speak better than Abel?

Sovereign Authority Must Be Respected

Who must not be refused? and how may that be done?
What contrast is here presented? and why?
How did the voice of God shake the earth?
What other shaking was predicted and by whom?
Discuss the circumstances surrounding this prediction.

The Enduring Nature of the Kingdom

What did the expression "Yet once more" signify?
What was meant by the shaking of heaven? and what two things would be demonstrated?
How long will the shaking continue? and why?
What is the kingdom which cannot be shaken?
What attitude must those who receive it manifest? and why?
Show that this is the kingdom predicted by Daniel, and the church which Jesus promised to build.
What kind of service is God pleased with?
What did Paul mean by saying that our God is a consuming fire?
When will the fire of God consume and for how long?

Lesson XIII—September 28, 1958

INSTRUCTION IN CHRISTIAN LIVING

Lesson Text

Heb. 13: 1-6, 17-21

1 Let love of the brethren continue.

2 Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 *Let* marriage be had in honor

among all, and *let* the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.

6 So that with good courage we say,

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:

What shall man do unto me?

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit *to them*: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this *were* unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things.

Golden: Text: *"For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come"* (Heb. 13: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING: **Heb. 13: 7-16.**

Daily Bible Readings

September 22. M.....	Description of a Righteous Man (Psalm 15)
September 23. T.....	Wise Counsel (Prov. 3: 1-4)
September 24. W.....	Keeping the Commandments (John 14: 15-21)
September 25. T.....	The Sons of God (Rom. 8: 14-18)
September 26. F.....	The Righteous (1 Pet. 3: 9-12)
September 27. S.....	The Promise (Heb. 10: 34-36)
September 28. S.....	Depart from Iniquity (2 Tim. 2: 10-19)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACE.—Rome and Jerusalem, probably.

Persons.—Paul and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

Introduction

The over-all purpose of all teaching regarding the Lord's plan of salvation must ultimately issue forth in living the life which has been ordained for his people. This has always been true, as may be clearly seen from the entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews; and it is certainly true in the Christian dispensation. It makes little difference what one knows from the doctrinal standpoint, if he does not put it into practice. The lessons which we have studied this quarter have emphasized the superiority of the Christian system over the Levitical; and it is fitting that the series of lessons should close with instruction in Christian living.

When Jesus gave the great commission, as recorded by Matthew, he said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you*: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 19,

19 And I exhort *you* the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, *even* our Lord Je'-sus,

21 Make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Je'-sus Christ; to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. A-men'.

20.) The first sermon delivered under this commission is found in Acts 2, and verse 41 tells something of the results which followed: "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." There are no words in the original for "unto them," and the idea is that those who were converted on Pentecost were added to the number of the apostles and others who were baptized during Christ's personal ministry; and the total numbered about three thousand souls.

This church of three thousand souls was the first church of Christ on earth, and it became the model of all others to follow. The very first thing that is said about the first group is, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42.) These words set forth the characteristic marks of the Christian life to which the members of the first church were

pledged by their acceptance of the gospel message. God himself set the apostles in the church (1 Cor. 12: 28), and they constituted the visible center of unity of the newly established body of Christ. The new disciples

were gathered around them, and from them the doctrine and discipline of the infant church proceeded. The instruction in this lesson today proceeds upon the same basis—the teaching is apostolic doctrine.

The Golden Text

For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come. This text is a part of Paul's final argument regarding the contrast between Judaism and Christianity. In the verses which immediately precede the golden text, the apostle shows that it is much better to be established by grace rather than by meats, in the spirit rather than by simply eating clean meats. He then goes on to show that those who partake of the altar of Judaism are excluded from the altar of the Christian system; and likewise, those who follow Christ are excluded from the Levitical order. An analogy is then drawn between the two great atonement sacrifices. The bodies of the beasts whose blood was taken into the most holy place had to be completely destroyed without the camp, and Jesus in like manner suffered without the city. Paul then concludes, "Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Verse 13.)

The word "for" with which the golden text begins shows that there is a connection between that which had just been said and the passage now under consideration. It is as if

Paul says, "Do not shrink from abandoning your old association and being branded as outcasts and traitors and robbed of your privileges as Jews. This is the reproach of Christ, and in bearing it you come closer to him. And furthermore, the surrender of your privileges under the old covenant need not be cause for regret; 'for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come.'"

The apostle, back in chapter 11, showed that the patriarchs of old did not consider this world as their abiding place, but "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." So then, if as a result of our devotion to Christ we are forced by persecution to leave our homes and wander from place to place, we should be willing to accept that treatment; for our home is yet to come. This was evidently written to comfort the Hebrew Christian on the supposition that they would be persecuted and driven from their home as a result of their attachment to Christ. It is also possible that there is also an indirect reference to the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem.

The Text Explained

Exhortation to Love and Good Works

(Heb. 13: 1-6)

Let love of the brethren continue. The wording of this exhortation indicates that there was no cause for Paul to reprove those brethren for a lack of brotherly love. That spirit characterized the church in Jerusalem from the beginning, as may be learned from Acts 2: 44, 45. In Acts 4: 32 we read: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed were his own; but they had all things common."

Brotherly love is one of the Christian graces which Peter says is es-

sential to make one acceptable to God. (2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) Jesus calls such love the badge of discipleship (John 13: 34, 35), and John shows its supreme importance by such statements as these: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3: 14-16.) "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath

seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John 4: 20, 21.)

Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. The expression "forget not to show love unto strangers" implies that the Hebrew brethren were well aware of that duty. Our modern way of living has greatly modified this practice, and it is possible that the need is not so wide-spread as it was back in Bible times; but that certainly is not a sufficient reason for ignoring the subject altogether. Great impressions for good can often be made by showing love unto strangers, and along with that, real needs can sometimes be met. The enemies of Christianity observed this virtue among Christians. The apostate Julian assigns "kindness to strangers" as one of the reasons for the rapid progress of Christianity during the early days of the church. The reference to entertaining angels unawares was probably to such cases as that of Abraham. (Gen. 18: 1-8) and Lot (Gen. 19: 1-11.)

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body. The Hebrew Christians were notable for this virtue also: "For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one." (Heb. 10: 34.) Sympathy with the unfortunate is a trait of character which is entirely pleasing to God. (Matt. 25: 31-46.) "As being yourselves also in the body" means that they must remember that they were not emancipated spirits, but were still in their fleshly body, and therefore liable to similar treatment. (Gal. 6: 1.)

Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. The low moral condition of that day made this injunction imperative; and what was true then is also true today. If marriage is held in honor "among all," then all people, both the married and the unmarried, will respect it. The mar-

riage bed is undefiled only when conjugal relations are limited to the husband and wife. Fornicators and adulterers include all violators of improper sexual relations among both the married and the unmarried. Most people who are guilty of illicit sexual relations escape human tribunals; but God will surely punish them.

Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have. The marginal note says, "Let your turn of mind be free." It is a noticeable fact that Paul combines immorality and covetousness in other places in his writings. (Eph. 5: 3-5; Col. 3: 5.) He also calls covetousness idolatry. In 1 Timothy 6: 10, he says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

For himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. "Himself" refers to God, and Paul's statement here seems to be a general adaptation of God's promise made to Moses (Deut. 31:6) and Joshua (Josh. 1:5). This is a gracious promise which God has made to all his people. Read carefully Matt. 6: 24-34; Phil. 4: 6, 7, 19.

So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me? These words are quoted from Psalm 118: 6. No better commentary on this idea can be found than the eighth chapter of Romans, and especially verses 31-39. This entire chapter should be read and studied often. (Luke 12: 4, 5.)

Regarding the Overseers and the Overseen

(Heb. 13: 17)

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them. This is a subject which deserves great consideration. The brethren are required to obey their leaders, that is, their elders; assuming, of course, that the elders obey the Lord. (1 Cor. 11: 1.) The mutual obligations of elders and people are clearly set forth in 1 Thess. 5: 12-15: "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at

peace among yourselves. And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all."

The New Testament plainly teaches that the Holy Spirit has designated certain men to oversee the work of the congregation. (Acts 20: 28; 1 Pet. 5: 2.) This is the divine arrangement, and there can be no substitute for it. This work cannot be delegated to others with divine approval. (Tit. 1: 7; 1 Pet. 5: 3.) The essential idea of overseership is that of directing or ruling, and it is therefore the duty of the elders to rule over the congregation. (1 Tim. 5: 17.) But inasmuch as the elders are over the congregation "in the Lord," it should be obvious, even to the superficial, that the ruling must be done according to the Lord's will.

But the same authority which makes it the duty of the elders to rule, also makes it the duty of the congregation to submit to their rule in the Lord. Only the faithful have the promise of an entrance into heaven, and the faithful are those who are obedient to their assigned duties. (Eph. 2: 10.) In congregations which have been fully set in order, the elders have been designated as the overseers for the purpose of directing the work of the church and *securing a faithful performance of the work which each one is supposed to do.* (Eph. 4: 16.)

For they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account. This statement gives us some idea of the fearful responsibility which rests upon the shoulders of every faithful elder in the church. They are not merely "business managers" of the congregation; they are "shepherds" *who watch for the souls of men.* The word "watch" means to guard, that is, care for (Arndt and Gingrich), to exercise constant vigilance over (Thayer). Merely meeting in business sessions, however frequent, does not meet the requirement of watching for the souls of people. Elders should keep in constant touch with the members of the congregation, seek to understand their needs, and attempt to

guide them in a way which will be pleasing to the Lord. In commenting on Acts 20: 28 and 1 Peter 5: 2, J. W. McGarvey makes the following observations regarding the meaning of being shepherds to the flock:

"Many an elder has imagined that the chief part of his work is accomplished when he has called together the flock once a week, or it may be once a month, and given them their regular supply of food, even when the food is nothing better than empty husks. And many an evangelist, mis-calling himself a pastor, has labored under the same mistake. Let it be noted, then, and never be forgotten, that the term employed in these passages expressed *the entire work of a shepherd*, of which *feeding* was very seldom even a part in the country where this use of the term originated. The shepherds of Judea, and those of Asia Minor, *pastured* their sheep throughout the entire year. Their duty was to guide them from place to place, to protect them from wild beasts, and to keep them from straying; but not to *feed* them." (The *Eldership*, p. 24f.)

A sobering thought for both elders and people is contained in the expression "they that shall give account." It frequently happens that elders know little or nothing about the life of their people. They have never been in their homes, and know nothing of their problems. How, then, are they to give an account regarding them? And the people, more often than not, consider that it is none of the elder's business what they do, and if and when they need their counsel they will call them. This is a situation for which both the people and the leaders will have to answer.

That they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you. The apostle John was an elder, and he wrote, "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." (3 John 4.) It will be joy beyond measure for elders to be able to give a report of faithfulness on the part of those for whose souls they have watched. And the same thing will prove to be a blessing beyond description when people are ushered into God's presence with such a report. But it staggers the imagination to

contemplate what the other side of the picture will be.

Closing Exhortations and Benedictions (Heb. 13: 18-21)

Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things. Paul frequently asked for the prayers of the brethren in his behalf. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." (Rom. 15: 30; 1 Thess. 5: 25; 2 Thess. 3: 1; Eph. 6: 18, 19; Col. 4: 3.) Paul's reference to a good conscience may have stemmed from the fact that his motives in opposing Judaism had been questioned by some; but he knew his own heart. He told the Corinthians, "Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well pleasing unto him." (2 Cor. 5: 9.)

And I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. This personal note implies that Paul was personally acquainted with the people to whom he wrote, and that he was looking forward to a reunion with them. This was an additional motive which he urged upon them for their prayers in his behalf; and it also implies that he was hindered from going to them by some adverse circumstance over which he had no control.

Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus. God is the author of peace and this reference was probably made because of the unsettled and disturbing conditions which were then prevalent, due to the activities and

influence of the Judaizing teachers. God raised Jesus from the dead and constituted him as the great shepherd of the sheep by virtue of the blood of an eternal covenant. Peter calls him the chief Shepherd: "And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. 5: 4.) This eternal covenant which was ratified with the blood of this great shepherd will guarantee God's blessings to his people. It was and is to emphasize his tender care for his people that Jesus is referred to as the great shepherd.

Make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. Paul had asked for their prayers, and he now prays for them. This prayer is for the complete mutual adjustment of all members of the flock into a perfected whole, fitted to do the perfect will of God. God's love for peace and his interest in us as peace-loving children is shown by the fact that he concluded an eternal covenant with men, and when people are willing to do the will of God, peace between him and them will always follow.

Paul told the Ephesians that "we are his [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2: 10.) This shows that God created us anew for a specific purpose. We were made by him to do his will. Whatever we do in the service of God is prompted by the heavenly Father. "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2: 13.) Only that which is pleasing to God will be acceptable to him.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What is the over-all purpose of all Bible teaching?

What did Jesus authorize in the great commission? and why?

How did the early church react to this instruction?

The Golden Text

Why did Paul mention the fact that we have here no abiding city?

What does loyalty to Jesus do to worldly relationships?

How should Christians feel regarding the sacrifices they must make in this respect?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED Exhortation to Love and Good Works

What is implied in the exhortation to let brotherly love continue?

What is the importance of brotherly love in the Christian life?

Why can't one love God without loving his brother?

How may people today show love unto strangers?

Is it possible for us to entertain "angels" unawares? Give reasons for your answer.
 How should Christian people feel and act toward their less fortunate brethren?
 Why say, "as being yourselves also in the body"?
 How may marriage be had in honor among all?
 What is God's attitude toward all offenders of this injunction?
 What does it mean to be free from the love of money? and why is the love of money dangerous?
 What great promise has God made in this respect?
 How, then, should his people feel about material things?

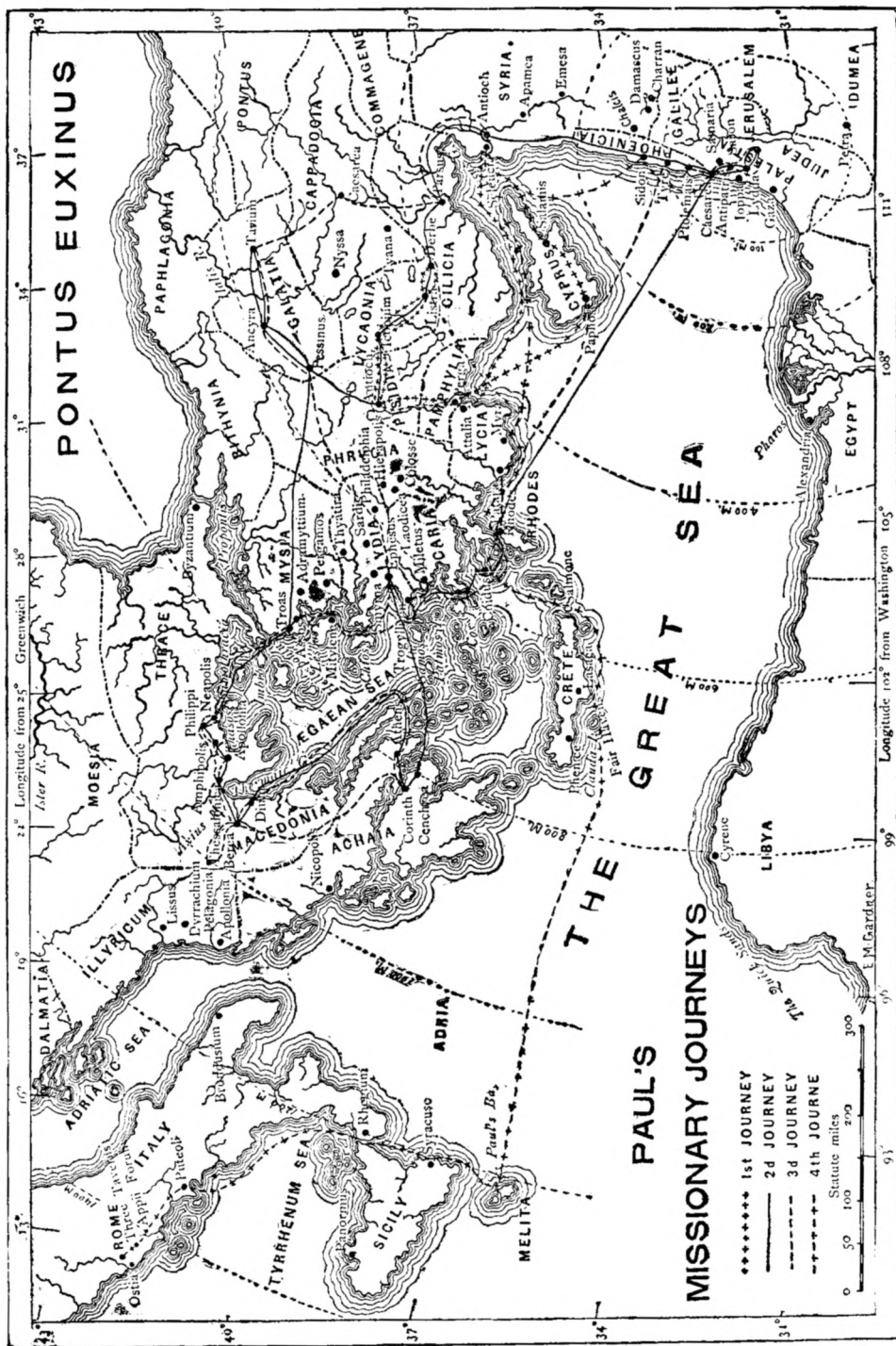
Regarding the Overseers and the Overseen

Why are people exhorted to obey the leaders of the church?
 How does Paul express the mutual relationship of the elders and the people?
 How do elders watch in behalf of the souls of the people?
 How may elders secure faithful obedience on the part of the members?

What is the work of a shepherd of the flock of God?
 What does it mean to give an account with joy? with grief?

Closing Exhortations and Benedictions

Why does Paul frequently ask the brethren to pray for him?
 Why did he say that he was persuaded that he had a good conscience?
 Why was Paul particularly anxious to have their prayers?
 Why mention the God of peace?
 How does God show his great interest in us?
 How does he make his people perfect?
 In what sense are we God's workmanship?
 How does he work in his people today?
 What is your estimate of the Book of Hebrews after this study?
 Do you believe that you can better explain the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ? Give a demonstration.
 How is Hebrews related to the other books of the New Testament, particularly Galatians and Romans?



FOURTH QUARTER

JAMES AND JUDE

AIM: To learn well the lesson taught by the brothers of our Lord—James and Jude.

Lesson I—October 5, 1958

THE BLESSEDNESS OF TRIALS

Lesson Text

James 1: 1-12

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Je'sus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.

2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations;

3 Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.

4 And let patience have *its* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord;

8 A doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate:

10 And the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which *the Lord* promised to them that love him.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation"* (James 1: 12a.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING: James 1: 13-17.

Daily Bible Readings

September 29. M..... Noah's Faith (Gen. 6: 14-22)
 September 30. T.....The Trial of Abraham (Gen. 22: 1-19)
 October 1. W.....Daniel Forbidden to Pray (Dan. 6: 4-23)
 October 2. T.....The Three Hebrew Children (Dan. 3: 8-30)
 October 3. F.....Growth of Faith (2 Thess. 1: 1-5)
 October 4. S.....God Proved Israel (Psalm 81: 1-7)
 October 5. S.....The Lord's Promise (1 Chron. 29: 1-17)

TIME: Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

PLACE: The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

PERSONS: James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

The Epistle of James has been called the epistle of practice, or the epistle of imperatives, there being more than fifty of them in the letter. The reason for referring to it in this way is because of the emphasis which the author places upon the practical and social aspects of Christianity. Martin Luther called the letter "a right strawy epistle, with no tinge of

the gospel about it." Luther's attitude toward the letter was due to the following facts: (1) the omission of distinctive doctrines of Christianity; and (2) the seeming antagonism to the great doctrine of salvation by faith, as set forth by Paul. It was for these reasons that Luther endeavored to remove the Book of James from the Sacred Canon. But what-

ever else it is, or whatever else may be said about the letter, it is certainly not an "epistle of straw."

It is true, however, that the epistle is remarkable for its omission of any reference to the distinctive doctrines of Christianity, such as the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, the ascension, and the Holy Spirit. The name of Christ occurs only twice in the entire epistle, while the word "gospel" does not occur at all; and neither is there any reference to the work of redemption. James was not primarily concerned with that which the world calls "theology." His emphasis is on the moral demands of Christianity; and he, accordingly, states the Christian faith in terms of moral excellence, and instructs his readers in the subject of Christian morals.

Christianity, of course, is more than just a set of moral rules. It is far more than that. It owes its very genius and existence to the supreme authority of Christ. But Christianity does involve morality, and it places great stress upon that aspect of the system. It is this phase of the question with which James deals. Taken alone, the emphasis on morality is not enough; but when read in con-

nection with the other writings of the New Testament, we have before us all the aspects of the Christian system. The epistle of James complements the other writings of the New Testament.

There is no ground for concluding that James was not a doctrinal teacher. On the contrary, there is every reason for thinking that he was; but he is, in this epistle, primarily a moral teacher. This was probably due to the fact that the moral side of Christianity was being neglected. Vincent quotes Dr. Scott as saying that "the epistle strikes the ear from beginning to end as an echo of the oral teaching of our Lord. There is scarcely a thought in it which cannot be traced to Christ's personal teaching. If John has lain on the Saviour's bosom, James has sat at his feet."

There is no other book in the New Testament which reflects more of the teaching of the sermon on the mount than the Book of James. It will benefit the student immeasurably if he will make a note of the correspondences which may be observed in these two sections of the New Testament. He will surely find that the parallels are very striking.

The Golden Text

The golden text will be considered in the body of the main lesson.

The Text Explained

The Salutation

(James 1: 1)

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Three persons called James are prominently mentioned in the New Testament: (1) James the son of Zebedee, (2) James the son of Alphaeus, sometimes called James the less, probably because he was younger than James the son of Zebedee, or maybe because he was low of stature; and (3) James the Lord's brother. The first two were members of the twelve, but the last was not, although he was called an apostle. (Gal. 1: 19.)

There is no absolute way to determine the identity of the author of the epistle now under consideration, but competent critics generally agree in ascribing it to James the Lord's brother. The fact that James the son of Zebedee was killed in A.D. 44 pretty well rules him out as being the

author of the epistle. See Acts 12: 1, 2.

The author of this epistle calls himself "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Tit. 1: 1.) This may have been designed, on the part of James, especially for Jewish readers; for not every Jew would consider a servant of God as being necessarily a servant of Jesus Christ. The term "servant" primarily means a bond-servant (margin) or a slave, that is, one who was subject to God and owned by him body and soul. (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20; Tit. 2: 14.)

To *the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion.* The expression "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion" refers to Jews who were scattered in countries other than Palestine. James 2: 1 indicates that the epistle was particularly addressed to Christian Jews, although other parts of the letter appear to have had unbelieving Jews in mind too.

Greeting. This is an abbreviated form of address used at the beginning of a letter, an expression of joy extended to the brethren. This form of salutation is found in only two other places in the New Testament—Acts 15: 23; 23: 26. The letter in Acts 15 was written to carry out the proposals made by James the Lord's brother (Acts 15: 13-21); and since the term "greeting" as a salutation is used by Christian writers only there and in the lesson now before us, the presumptive evidence is fairly strong that the author of this epistle is the same as the James of Acts 15.

The Christian Attitude Toward Temptations

(James 1: 2-8)

Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations.

The primary meaning of the original word for "greeting" in verse 1 is rejoice, be glad; and it appears that James is following up that idea as he begins his address to the brethren. James does not mean to say that trials (that is the meaning of temptations) are a joy in and of themselves; the joy comes as the result of having borne them faithfully. This is the true spirit of Christianity. "Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12: 2.) This spirit was exemplified by Paul on many occasions. (Acts 16: 25; 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.

The term "knowing" seems to be used in the sense of *recognizing*, that is, they should look upon these trials as having a definite purpose in view, namely, the bringing about, producing, or creating patience, that is, steadfastness, endurance, or perseverance. "And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness, and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." (Rom. 5: 3-5.)

And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and en-

tire, lacking in nothing. The idea is. Let patience have the opportunity to perform the work and bring about the result of which it is capable. Steadfastness is one of the cardinal graces of the Christian life. (2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) When it is remembered that patience is the characteristic or trait of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest of trials and sufferings (Thayer), we can see something of the work which it does.

The result of the work of patience is described as "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." One is perfect when he has reached his maturity or fulfilled the end contemplated. (Phil. 3: 15, 16.) "Entire" carries with it the idea of being intact, undamaged, or having all that which properly belongs to it. "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be *preserved entire*, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5: 23.) "Lacking in nothing" is a negative corroboration of a positive statement. This method of expression is characteristic of James: "entire, lacking in nothing;" "who giveth . . . and upbraideth not;" "in faith, nothing doubting."

But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. Verse 4 describes the perfect character; and now James goes back, as it were, and supposes a case where one does not have the wisdom necessary to reach perfection. In that case, says James, let him go to the proper and never failing source of wisdom, and all of his needs will be supplied. Wisdom, as used here, may be defined as good judgment which is necessary in order to bear the trials and remain true to God; it is the ability to make the proper decisions when trials come upon us. Cf. Acts 6: 3; Col. 4: 5; James 3: 13, 17, where the same original word is found.

God, who is always faithful, has promised help for his children in time of need. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that

ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 13.) "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." (Heb. 4: 15, 16.) Trials are sometimes necessary in order to develop steadfastness, but if we will ask God for wisdom to meet them, they will never be able to overthrow us or keep us from being "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." God never reproaches his children for asking him for help, nor manifests any displeasures when they cry to him in time of need.

But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.) "Doubting," as used here, does not mean unbelief, in the popular sense of the term, but refers to a state of mind which is at odds with itself, or that hesitates. (Acts 10: 20.) Hesitation can be the balance between faith and unbelief, and it usually tends toward the latter.

To ask in faith, then, implies a state of mind in which a man not only believes in the existence of God, but in which his moral character is apprehended and the evidence of his willingness to reward the petitioner is acknowledged. It is belief in the beneficent activity of God, as well as in his personality. Such faith relies upon God and expects that what is asked for will be granted by him. The hesitation between faith and unbelief is compared to a surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. The surge of the sea has no stability, but is at the mercy of the wind. (Eph. 4: 14; Rom. 4: 20, 21.)

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways. "That man" is emphatic, and has a slightly contemptuous ring. Such a man receives the general gifts of God's providence (Matt. 5: 45); but he does not get anything for which he specifically makes request.

"A doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways" is a comment and further enlargement upon "that man." The "doubleminded man" is not deceitful, but is dubious and undecided, oscillating between faith and unbelief. (James 4: 8.) An "unstable" person is one who is restless and vacillating. This description which James gives of the hesitating man is a terrible indictment against many professed Christians today; it reminds us of the days of Elijah: "And Elijah came near to all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18: 21.)

The Lesson Illustrated

(James 1: 9-12)

But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. It is difficult to accept the viewpoint that "an entirely new subject is now started, which has no connection with what has preceded," as some aver. It seems more natural to regard "but" as introducing a contrast between a doubleminded man and the situation which is described in verses 9-11. The difficulty mentioned above is increased when we remember that "temptation" is the subject under consideration in verses 2-8, and that the same subject begins again in verse 12. It seems best therefore to regard verses 9-11 as an illustration of the Christian attitude toward temptations.

Thus, instead of the brother in low outward circumstances, that is, poor and afflicted, being tempted to complain of his lot in life; he should put his mind on his high spiritual station, and glory in his high estate. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5: 3.) "Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?" (James 2: 5.) An unfavorable lot in life can become a trial, but the informed and faithful Christian can "count it all joy" if he is compelled to be tried in this manner. (1 Cor. 7: 20-24.)

And in like manner, the rich man, instead of complaining because of his humiliation, by being stripped of his goods for Christ's sake, should glory in that fact. "For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one." (Heb. 10: 34.) Such a situation as this is a real test of one's character. It will show him where his real trust is—in his earthly riches or in God.

"Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away" seems to give the destiny of him who is merely rich in worldly goods; and since that is what will surely happen to him, he should therefore glory if he is brought into a state in which he must trust in God for the necessities of life. (Phil. 4: 10-13.) The Bible does not teach that it is wrong for Christians to be wealthy in material possession: that is not the point which James is discussing here; but it does teach that the rich man is in a precarious position, unless he places his trust in God. (1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) The point that

James appears to be making here is that regardless of the "low" situation in which one finds himself, whether his natural circumstances, or whether he was reduced to poverty by some outward power, he should not let the trials incident to such a life turn his mind away from God. There is no place for doublemindedness in the Christian religion. (Matt. 6: 22, 23.) The Lord's people should "count it all joy" when they fall into manifold temptations. Read again verses 2-4.

For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings. This is a further expansion of the figure which was introduced in the preceding verse.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him. The purpose of this verse is to give some idea of the reward for successfully enduring temptation. The source of temptation is discussed in verses 13-15.

Questions for Discussion

What is the general subject for this quarter? and its aim?
What is the subject for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What is the general nature of the epistle we are now studying?
What was Luther's appraisal of it? and why did he make it?
How does the Book of James stand related to other parts of the New Testament?
What emphasis did James put on his teaching?
How does his letter compare with the sermon on the mount?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Salutation

What James wrote this epistle?
Give reasons for your answer.
How did he identify himself? and why?
To whom did he write? and what is meant by the Dispersion?
What bearing does his use of the term "greeting" have on the possible authorship of the letter?

The Christian Attitude Toward Temptations

How can people count it all joy when they fall into many kinds of trials?
What should they recognize in such trials?
What is "patience" and what is its perfect work?
What is the meaning of being "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing"?

What peculiarity in James' writing is noted here?
But if any of you lacketh wisdom for what?
What is "wisdom"?
What has God promised to do for his children who are in need?
What is meant by 'upbraideth not'?
In what spirit must the child of God ask for his blessings?
What does it mean for one to be a doubter?
What is involved in one's asking in faith?
How does James illustrate the attitude of the doubter?
What should "that man" not think?
What is a doubleminded man?
How is he unstable in all his ways?

The Lesson Illustrated

In what way are verses 9-11 related to the preceding part of the lesson?
Why should the man of low degree glory in his high estate?
Why should the rich man glory in his being brought low?
In what way can poverty and riches become trials?
Why will the rich man pass away as the flower of the grass?
Is it wrong for Christians to be wealthy in material things? Why?
How does James further illustrate the passing of the materially rich?
What blessing is pronounced upon the man who endures temptation?
What is the source of our temptations to sin? Why is this true?
What do you think of the practical value of this lesson? Why?

Lesson II—October 12, 1958

DOERS OF THE WORD

Lesson Text

James 1: 15-27

18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Ye know *this*, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.

23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like

unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But he that looketh into the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.

26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves"* (James 1: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 24-29.

Daily Bible Readings

October 6. M.....	Doers of the Law (Rom. 2: 13-15)
October 7. T.....	Perform the Doing of It (2 Cor. 8: 1-13)
October 8. W.....	Doing the Will of the Father (Matt. 12: 46-50)
October 9. T.....	Not a Doer (James 4: 1-11)
October 10. F.....	Blessedness of the Doer (Luke 11: 27, 28)
October 11. S.....	Must Keep the Commandments (1 John 2: 1-4)
October 12. S.....	Keeping the Commandments (Rev. 22: 14-22)

TIME: Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

PLACE: The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

PERSONS: James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

The word of God is sufficient for all the needs of man which relate to his spiritual life. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: *that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work*" (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) "*Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness*, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue." (2 Pet. 1: 3.)

Paul declares in Rom. 1: 16 that

the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." This is to say that the word of God must be learned, believed, and obeyed, if it is to benefit the individual. Our subject for today is "Doers of the Word," and this implies that we have learned that which it says, and that we are willing to do it. For one to know that which the Bible teaches him to do involves him in an obligation to do it; and if he does not do it, the result is sin. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.)

Any one who sincerely desires to please God has the Lord's promise that he shall know that which has been ordained for him. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, . . . (John 7: 17.) No one can please God who does not want to know that which he says, and no one can please him who is not

willing to make a sincere effort to learn that which is said; and then, after one knows his duty, he must be willing to do the best he can to do it, if he expects to meet the Lord in peace at the last day. The parable of the talents (Matt. 25: 14-30) is a good illustration of the principle now before us.

The Golden Text

The golden text for today will be considered in the body of the lesson.

The Text Explained

The Function of the Word of Truth

(James 1: 18)

Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth. After having pointed out the source of evil, and that every good thing comes from God (verses 13-17), James, in the passage now before us, cites one of the greatest examples of God's goodness, namely, the salvation of our souls. This was due to his own will, and not to any external circumstances, thus showing that his essential nature is to do good and not evil.

In verse 15, James says, "Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death;" and now, in contrast with that which sin does, God, "brought us forth" as his people. To bring forth in this sense is equivalent to conversion. "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth . . . And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." (1 Pet. 1: 23-25b.)

Before Jesus left his disciples to ascend back to his Father, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) The gospel which Jesus authorized to be preached is God's power to save the *believer* (Rom. 1: 16), and that gospel is the "word of truth." "In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Eph. 1: 13, 14.)

The reason why the gospel is God's power to save the believer is that it *moves* him to do that which the gospel authorizes men to do. Noah believed God's message, and he was "moved with godly fear" to do that which God had commanded him (Heb. 11: 7); and in the same way, when people believe the gospel they are moved to obey that which they are told to do. This is the meaning of "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves."

That we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. This figure seems to be based on the law of Moses which required that the firstfruits be consecrated to God; such were always regarded as holy and were not subject to the will of men. The same general idea is expressed in the New Testament. (Rom. 11: 16.) Christians therefore, being "a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" should be consecrated to God. This is what Paul meant when he said, "Follow after . . . sanctification [consecration] without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12: 14.)

Exhortation to Self-control

(James 1: 19-21)

Ye know this, my beloved brethren. Bible students have never been able to agree on whether this has reference to the preceding, or to that which follows; but it is certain that in either case the lesson is the same. It seems to be in harmony with the context to say that they knew that good comes from God and that they had been converted by his word of truth; and that as a result they should endeavor to practice self-control, as set forth in the following verses.

But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. Every

person should cultivate a willingness to hear with promptness that which God's word teaches. To be swift or quick to hear is one of his requirements, and that characteristic shows an attitude on the part of the individual which will result in his knowing the truth. The Hebrew brethren had "become dull of hearing," and consequently needed to be retaught the truth. (Heb. 5: 11, 12.)

"Slow to speak, slow to wrath" has reference to those things involving the word of God. People should exercise great care when speaking regarding the truth, and they should never allow anger or wrath to enter into the discussion. McKnight paraphrases the statement as follows: "Since God has willed to regenerate us by the gospel, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear the gospel, and slow to speak concerning it till he understands it; slow also to wrath in religious matters." The Jewish rabbis were wont to say, "Two ears are given to us, but only one tongue: the ears are exposed, while the tongue is walled in behind the teeth."

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The cause of Christ is never advanced by ill-advised speech, and by exhibitions of anger while discussing religious matters. Man's wrath is rarely, if ever, justified; and even "righteous indignation" is too often intermixed with other elements. Frail humanity, unlike God, seldom, if ever, knows all the circumstances involved in a given case. "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but a grievous word stirreth up anger. The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out folly." (Prov. 15: 1, 2.)

Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. Filthiness refers to moral uncleanness and vulgarity, involving the individual himself; while overflowing of wickedness probably means wickedness which is extended to and affects others. At any rate, it is abounding or prevailing wickedness around them. All of this must be removed before the word of God can have its effect in the hearts and lives of people. The implanted word is the

gospel message which is sown in the heart. (Matt. 13: 19.) One receives it with meekness when he is teachable. "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." (Mark 10: 15.) The word of God is able to save the soul, because it contains the necessary information which one must have in order to do that which is pleasing to God. (Rom. 1: 16, 17; 10: 1-3.)

Putting Teaching into Practice Is Real Religion (James 1: 22-27)

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. The concluding part of the sermon on the mount is probably the best commentary we have on this passage: "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof." (Matt. 7: 24-27.) Any reasoning which one does that leads him to conclude that it is not necessary for him to do that which he hears, results in self deception; he injures no one but himself.

For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

The natural face is the face one is born with, and that is what is seen in the mirror. This comparison is intended to illustrate the lesson of verse 22. The man sees himself as he is while looking in the mirror; but when he turns away and becomes absorbed in other things, he immediately forgets that which needs attention, and so does nothing about it. That is precisely what happens when people read the word of God and do

nothing about it. As long as people look into God's mirror, they can see their true spiritual condition; but when they turn away from it without a determination to obey that which they learned, and become absorbed in other things (Mark 4: 14, 15, 18, 19), they soon forget what they saw, and so do nothing about it.

But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. The expression "looketh into" denotes a penetrating effort to determine the very essence of the law. The primary meaning of the original word for "looketh" is to look with head bowed forward and body bent; to stoop and look into (Thayer), as in Luke 24: 12; John 20: 11; 1 Pet. 1: 12. When one stoops down and takes a close look, he is endeavoring to learn the facts in the case. The picture of a man poring over a roll of the law is a good illustration of what is meant here.

The "perfect law" is the gospel of Christ. It is perfect because it furnishes a man completely unto every good work. In speaking of the way of life, Peter says, "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1: 10, 11.) This law is also called the "law of liberty," an added statement to define the *law*. It is the law of liberty because it makes men free. Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8: 31, 32.) The psalmist sang, "I shall walk at liberty; for I have sought thy precepts." (Psalm 119: 45.)

But it is not enough for one to be a hearer of the truth, however attentive and critical his hearings may be; he must also be a doer of that which he learns. Furthermore, he must *continue* to hear, that is, learn; and he must not forget that which he learns. Such a man continues to seek for truth, and puts it into prac-

tice as he learns it. A man who does this shall be blessed in his doing. David said that there is great reward in keeping the precepts of Jehovah. (Psalms 19: 11.)

If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. It appears that this verse and the next one are intended to illustrate that which has just been said about doing that which one learns from the law. Thus, if anyone supposes himself to be religious, but does not control his speech, that man's religion is vain. It is worthless because he is acting in violation of God's will as expressed in his law. It is not necessary for one to violate every precept of the law in order to be unacceptable to the Lord. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law." (James 2: 10, 11.) To stumble in one point is to set aside or disregard one thing which the Lord requires—controlling the tongue, in this instance. James discusses this subject at length in chapter 3.

The original word for "religious" is found only here in the New Testament, while the original for "religion" occurs only in Acts 26: 5; Col. 2: 18; and James 1: 26, 27. The word "religious" (English) is found in Acts 17: 22, but it is from an original word which means "demon-fearing;" and in a similar manner, "religion" is found in English in Acts 25: 19, but it is from a word meaning "demon-worship." The word "religion" in Gal. 1: 13, 14 is from an original word meaning "Judaism." *Religion*, as used in James 1: 26, 27, means the "ceremonial" or external service which one performs, prompted by a pure heart as guided by the word of God.

Self-deception is referred to three times in the first chapter of James: (1) with reference to the source of temptation, verse 16; (2) with reference to doing as well as hearing, verse 22; and (3) with reference to thinking that one can have an acceptable religion, while he bridles not his

longue, verse 26. Self-deception is a serious question, and its consequences should be stressed often.

Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James does not mean to say that this is all of religion. What he is saying here is a practical demonstration of that which is essential to pleasing God. The adjectives "pure" and "undefiled" present the positive and negative qualities of acceptable religion. The two examples which James cites here are benevolence and personal purity.

1. *Benevolence.* "James strikes a downright blow here at ministry by proxy, or by mere gifts of money. Pure and undefiled religion demands *personal contact* with the world's sorrow: to *visit* the afflicted, and to visit them *in their affliction*. 'The rich man, prodigal of money, which is to him of little value, but altogether incapable of devoting any personal attention to the objects of his alms, often injures society by his donations;

but this is rarely the case with that far nobler charity which makes men familiar with the haunts of wretchedness, and follows the objects of its care through all the phases of his life.' (Lecky, '*History of European Morals*,' ii., 98.) (Vincent.) Head Matt. 25: 31-46.

2. *Personal purity.* The world is diametrically opposed to God, and people cannot indulge in the ways of the world and please him. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2: 15-17.) "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." (James 4: 4.)

Questions for Discussion

What is our subject for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What is the word of God able to do for man?
How does it furnish one unto every good work?
What is necessary in order for the gospel to be effective in one's life?
What obligation does the knowledge of the Bible bring to one?
What promise does Jesus make to those who want to do his will?
Is it possible for one to please God and not try to learn his will?
Give reason for your answer.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Function of the Word of Truth

What is the connection of this lesson with the preceding part of James 1?
What prompted God to save us? and why?
What is meant by "brought us forth by the word of truth"?
What is the word of truth?
Why is the gospel the power of God to save the believer?
What is meant by being a kind of first-fruits of his creatures?

What obligation does this place upon us?

Exhortation to Self-control

Ye know what?
What does it mean to be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath?
Why doesn't the wrath of man work the righteousness of God?

What are Christians exhorted to put away? and what is meant by each?

What is the implanted word? and how is it to be received?

Why is this word able to save the soul?

Putting Teaching into Practice Is Real Religion

Why does one delude himself, if he hears and does not do?

What comment did Jesus make on this principle?

Why is the hearer only like a man beholding his natural face in a mirror?

What is the point of comparison?

What is the perfect law? and how does one look into it?

Why is it also called the law of liberty? and from what does it free?

What is the man who pleases God expected to "continue" to do?

How does James illustrate the principle of hearing and doing?

What does it mean for one to bridle his tongue?

Why does a failure to do this result in self-deception?

How much disobedience does it take to constitute one a law-breaker? and why is this true?

How many times do the words "religious" and "religion" occur in the New Testament?

What does it mean for one to be religious?

How many times does James mention self-deception in the first chapter of his letter? and in what connections?

What does acceptable religion include?
What are the functions of the adjectives
"pure" and "undefiled"?
What two phases of religion does James
list here to illustrate his point?

What is meant by visiting the fatherless
and widows in their affliction?
Whose duty is this? and why?
What is it to be spotted by the world?
How may one avoid this?

Lesson III—October 19, 1958

RESPECT OF PERSONS

Lesson Text

James 2: 1-9

1 My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Je'-sus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

2 For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing;

3 And ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool;

4 Do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren;

did not God choose them that are poor as to the world *to be* rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?

6 But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats?

7 Do not they blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called?

8 Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well:

9 But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.

Golden Text.—*"To have respect of persons in judgment is not good"*
(Prov. 24: 23b.)

Devotional Heading.—Rom. 2: 11, 12.

Daily Bible Readings

October 13.	M. God Does Not Regard Persons (Deut. 10: 12-22)
October 14.	T. No Respect of Persons with God (2 Chron. 19: 1-7)
October 15. W.....	All Have the Same Creator (Job 31: 13-15)
October 16. T.....	Rich and Poor Have Same Maker (Job 34: 10-20)
October 17.	F.. No Difference between Jew and Gentile (Acts 15: 1-9)
October 18.	S. No Respect of Persons (Rom. 2: 1-12)
October 19. S.....	The Father Judges (1 Pet. 1: 14-17)

Time: Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.
Place: The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.
Persons: James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

The fundamental principles on which this lesson is based is the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. If these principles are thoroughly understood and put into practice, the danger of showing respect to persons will be greatly lessened. Another basic principle which is closely related to the ones just mentioned is that of righteousness. God himself is always governed by this principle, and those who are like God must follow his example. If people will always make it a point to

do that which is right on all occasions, it will be much easier to give to each man that to which he is entitled.

There always has been and there always will be differences among people. Some are rich and some are poor; some are wise and some are foolish; some are industrious and some are lazy; some have a pleasing disposition, while the disposition of others is distasteful; some are willing to cooperate in every good work, while others have a tendency to dis-

courage every worthwhile effort. This alone is enough to show that one cannot feel the same toward every person, but it does not mean that we should stop there. In the language of another, "To work the way the artist works is everybody's duty; to take the common clay of life and mold it into beauty." This is the lesson set forth in Isaiah's portrayal of the messianic kingdom. (Isa. 11: 6-9.) We should help others to be better.

When people come into the kingdom of Christ they become brethren

in the Lord; and while they are not always on an equal (Matt. 25: 14-30), each one is entitled to that consideration which will have the tendency to make him a better person and more faithful in the Lord's service. It appears to have been true in the days of James, just as it is true in our day, that some had a disposition to be more considerate of those who are in higher stations, than to those who are not so fortunate. This attitude is wrong anywhere, but it is especially so in the assembly of the saints.

The Golden Text

"To have respect of persons in judgment is not good" The primary application of this text is to kings, judges, and magistrates in earthly governments, but the principle is the same anywhere: it is never right to pass unfair judgement on anyone, in any place, or at any time. The practice of showing respect for persons is always held up to contempt in the Scriptures. Moffatt renders Prov. 28: 21-23 as follows: "To favor one side is not fair—to sin, bribed by a bit of bread! The selfish man is eager to get rich; he never dreams he may be in distress. In the long run, a man who will reprove gets more thanks than a flatterer." Jude 16: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), *showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage*"

Respect of persons, in the final analysis, is for the sake of advantage. Even those who try by that method to make a good impression on others

hope to gain for themselves in the long run. The whole practice is based to a large extent on selfishness, and selfishness is foreign to the spirit of Christ. Character, and not person, is the thing which counts in the sight of God, both in this life and in the judgment day.

When Peter was called to the house of Cornelius to open the door of faith to the Gentiles he, for the first time, saw the meaning of the subject now before us. As he began his address on that memorial occasion, he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10: 34b-35.) And then, years later he wrote, "And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear." (1 Pet. 1: 17.) This is God's method of dealing with all people, and it must be ours, too, if we are to please him.

The Text Explained

The Principle Stated and Illustrated (James 2: 1-4)

My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. As rendered here, this is a clear imperative, and no thoughtful person can possibly misunderstand the Spirit's meaning. The faith (the article is in the original) of our Lord Jesus Christ is the gospel, and the teaching which Jesus authorized under this dispensation. Faith is the leading feature of it, and that term is often used to denote the whole of the sys-

tem, just as the term "law" is used to designate the system under Moses. The word "hold" is used in the sense of possessing or practicing. Christians must not try to practice the religion of Christ with respect of persons. It will be observed all through the epistle that James bases Christian practice on Christian faith.

Jesus is called "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2: 8) which some interpreters regard as meaning that Jesus is the true Shekinah of the temple (church), based, of course, upon the Shekinah of the Old Testament. (Ex. 40: 34-

38.) The cloud indicated God's presence with his people, and Jesus as the true manifestation of his presence now is referred to as the Lord of glory. (Heb. 1: 3; 2 Cor. 4: 6.) The glory of Christ rests upon all his people, the poor as well as the rich, and it is therefore inconsistent to regard one with less favor than the other. The root idea of respect of persons is *partiality*. (Rom. 2: 11; Eph. 6: 9; Col. 3: 25.) There is no place for partiality in the kingdom of Christ.

For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing. Inasmuch as James wrote to his Jewish brethren who had accepted Christ, it is easy to understand why he referred to their meeting place as a synagogue. This, incidentally, is the only place in the New Testament where the term "synagogue" is used to designate a place for Christian assemblies. The letter which James wrote is addressed to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion, and this fact would indicate that he had no particular synagogue in mind, but was simply using this to illustrate his point.

The contrast between the rich man and the poor man is clearly stated. The two men may have been members of the congregation, or they may have been visitors. This point is not clear and neither is it important to the understanding of the lesson. The idea is that a situation is present which will test the attitude of the congregation. Will they be partial or impartial? The value of this lesson to us today lies in the fact that this same situation may be seen in the average assembly almost anywhere.

And ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool. This must be understood in the light of Jewish practice. The people of Christ's day were noted for their desire for places of honor, and this will give us some idea of what was meant by a "good place." If James were writing to people of our day, he doubtless would say that the well groomed man was offered a good seat near the front of the building, while the poor man was

asked to stand or sit in some less desirable place. To sit under one's footstool was to sit on the ground or floor. Some people had a place to put their feet, as well as a good seat.

The New Testament does not forbid the showing of proper respect to age, office, and distinguished talents and service, but even this should not be done to the neglect or injury of those in humbler circumstances. All men, whether rich or poor, should be made to realize that they have no special claim to salvation and Christian privileges; and such treatment should be accorded to each as will make him feel that the congregation and the leaders have a genuine interest in his soul. Every one should be made to feel that he is in the Lord's presence, and that the Lord never shows respect for persons.

Do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? The term for "make distinctions" literally means to be at odds, doubt, waver, and the meaning here seems to be that in making a distinction between the rich and the poor, they are manifesting a doubt, or were at odds with themselves, regarding the faith which they professed, and which abolished all such distinctions. The same original word is found in Acts 10: 20; Rom. 4: 20; 14: 23; James 1: 6. The marginal note in the passage now before us is "are ye not divided in your own mind?" that is, they were wavering or hesitating; and the result was that they became judges with evil surmises, or judges of injustice (Luke 18: 6) which led to the breaking up of the unity of the assembly by differentiating between those present on the basis of their worldly standing.

Respect of Persons Reverses the Divine Order (James 2: 5-7)

Hearken, my beloved brethren, did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him? The use of the term "hearken" in this place and in Acts 15: 13 is seen by some Bible students as identifying the James here with the James there, making them one and the same person. The words of the author of this epistle fall like sledge-hammer

blows as he condemns the partiality in question; and the manner in which he proceeds with his argument reveals him as a vigorous writer or speaker.

The poor are those who are poor in the estimation of the world. Thus, those whom the world regards as not being worthy of the consideration usually given to the rich have been chosen of God to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. To be rich in faith does not mean that they were rich in the quality or the amount of their faith, but rich in their position as believers; the fact that they are believers makes them rich. The promised kingdom is probably the Messianic kingdom, although it possibly refers to the heavenly kingdom, that is, the one after this life is over. (Matt. 5: 3; 11: 5; 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.)

But ye have dishonored the poor man. They had dishonored, that is, insulted or treated shamefully those whom God honors; and they did this by withholding from them that which was rightfully theirs, and in so doing they had reversed the order. Anyone who is accepted of God deserves the respect and esteem of his fellows.

Do not the rich oppress you, and

themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? The term "oppress" literally means to exploit or dominate someone, commit acts of outrage. The original word occurs in only one other place in the New Testament—Acts 10: 38. The dragging before the judgment-seats probably refers to persecution, although it could mean that they were simply taking advantage of them and using this means to exploit them further. The action of the rich which is described in this and the following verse strongly implies that they were not members of the body of Christ and made no profession to Christianity.

Do not they blaspheme the honorable

name by which ye are called?

James is here continuing his argument against showing partiality. The rich whom they sought to honor by dishonoring the poor are the very ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which they were called. The term "blaspheme" means to revile or speak injuriously, slander, defame. The "honorable name" was the

name of Christ which was called upon them.

It should be observed in this connection that James does not mean to teach that the poor as a class are all acceptable to God, and that the rich as a class are unacceptable. There is no special virtue in being poor, and it is not essential that a rich man be evil; but it is true, as any thoughtful observer can see, that it is more often the poor who accept the Lord's way of life than the rich. "For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." (1 Cor. 1: 26.) God wants every person to be saved, but the rich, being influenced by the ways of the world, usually reject his offer. God and the world are diametrically opposed to each other, and one cannot be accepted without rejecting the other. "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." (James 4: 4.)

The Royal Standard of Conduct (James 2: 8, 9)

Howbeit if ye fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: Bible students are not agreed as to why the law is called the "royal law." Some hold that it is because it was ordained of God; others, because of its excellence and nobleness; and still others, because the precept here quoted from Lev. 19: 18 is the king of all laws. Paul says that the whole law is fulfilled or summed up in this one commandment. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13: 8-10; Gal. 5: 14; Matt. 22: 34-40.)

Vincent calls attention to the fact that the term "fulfill" is stronger than the more common word observe or keep which is found in James 2:

10. The idea expressed by "fulfill" is to accomplish or carry out the demands of the law. (Rom. 2: 27.) When people do that which the law was intended to accomplish, they have fulfilled the law. Jesus explained what it means to love one's neighbor in the parable of the good Samaritan. (Luke 10: 25-37.)

But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. The word "but" introduces a contrast. James said in the preceding verse that they were doing well if they fulfilled the law which says, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: BUT if they show respect for persons, it is sin. The original term for "have respect of persons" is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. It literally means to show partiality. This word, and the one found in Acts 10: 34, as well as the one found in Rom. 2: 11; Eph. 6: 9; Col. 3: 25; and James 2: 1, "have so far been found only in Christian writers." (Arndt and Gingrich.)

The expression "ye commit sin" is literally "ye work sin," as in Matt. 7: 23. It is a strong statement, and the position of *sin* is emphatic: "it

is *sin* that you are working." (Vincent.) *The Expositor's Greek Testament* observes that the strength of the expression is intended to remind the hearers (or readers) that it is wilful, conscious sin of which they will be guilty, if they show respect for persons on account of their wealth.

The word "convicted" carries with it the idea of establishing the fact of sin. The individual sinner might not be personally convinced that he was a sinner, but the law declares that he is. (John 16: 7-11.) Every responsible person will have to face the word of God at the judgment at the last day. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak." (John 12: 48-50.) James 2: 10-13 shows the seriousness of setting aside even one commandment of the law of God.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What fundamental principles underlie this lesson?

How will the principle of righteousness help one to solve the problem discussed in this lesson?

What responsibility does the difference in people impose on the Christian?

What relationship do all people have in Christ? and what should this lead all of us to try to do?

The Golden Text

What is the primary application of this text?

Why isn't it good to have respect of persons in judgment?

What motive usually prompts people to show this respect for persons?

What sin is really at the bottom of it all? Give reasons for your answer.

What did Peter say about this subject? and under what conditions?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Principle Stated and Illustrated

What is the principle which James stated?

What is the faith? and how may one hold it with respect of persons?

What is the significance of the term "hold"?

On what does James always base Christian practice?

Why is Jesus called "the Lord of glory"? and what bearing does that have on this lesson?

What is the root meaning of respect of persons?

Why did James call their meeting place a synagogue?

What situation did he suppose in order to teach the lesson now before us?

What was meant by a good place and under the footstool?

Does the New Testament forbid the showing of proper respect for the aged, etc.? Give reasons for your answer.

What is meant by making distinctions among yourselves?

What was the direct result of such action?

Respect of Persons Reverses the Divine Order

What is the divine order?

What does it mean to be rich in faith?

What kingdom was promised to the poor? and what poor?

How had they dishonored the poor man?

What did James say that the rich did to the Lord's people? Discuss each of the three charges separately.

Does James mean that all poor are acceptable to God and that all the rich are not? Give reasons for your answer.

Why don't more rich people accept the gospel?

The Royal Standard of Conduct
 What is the "royal law" and why is it so called?
 What does Paul say regarding the commandment cited by James?
 What does it mean to "fulfil" the law?

What happens when people have respect of persons?
 What is the significance of "ye commit sin"?
 What is meant by being convicted by the law as transgressors?

Lesson IV—October 26, 1958

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

Lesson Text

James 2: 14-26

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.

18 Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from *thy* works, and I by my works will show thee *my* faith.

19 Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain

man, that faith apart from works is barren?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up I'-saac his son upon the altar?

22 Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect;

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.

24 Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.

25 And in like manner was not also Ra'-hab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?

26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

Golden Text.—*"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love."* (Gal. 5: 6.)

Devotional Heading.—Heb. 11: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

October 20.	M. Faith of the Syrophenician Woman (Matt. 15: 21-28)
October 21.	T. Faith of the Blind Man (John 9: 13-38)
October 22.	W. Faith of Bartimaeus (Matt. 20: 30-34)
October 23.	T. Faith of Nathaniel (John 1: 47-51)
October 24.	F. Faith of a Woman (Luke 7: 36-50)
October 25.	S. Faith of Jairus (Matt. 9: 18-25)
October 26.	S. Faith of Mary (Luke 10: 38-42)

Time.—Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

Place.—The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

Persons.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of faith. This fact should be firmly fixed in the mind of every follower of Jesus; for no one can please God without faith. (Heb. 11: 6; Mark 16: 16b; 2 Cor. 5: 7; 1 John 5: 4.) Faith is one of the greatest

motivating forces known to man. A person with genuine faith in the Lord is willing to make any sacrifice in order to please him.

The term "faith" occurs several times in the first two chapters of James; and that fact should be taken

into consideration when we come to study the lesson before us today. The word "faith" is first mentioned in James 1: 2, and there we learn that the Lord expects our faith to be proved or tested. Something of the great importance of our personal faith can be learned from James 1: 58. "The faith" of James 2: 1 is the faith of the gospel, while to be "rich in faith" (James 2: 5) indicates something of the great privilege of Christians; they are rich because of their position as believers.

It will be much easier for us to understand the teaching of James in our lesson for today, if we will first

endeavor to get some idea of the background against which he wrote. In James 2: 1 he gave his readers this specific admonition: "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." And then in verses James 2: 2-13 he pointed out to them how they were actually violating, or how they could violate, the faith or teaching of Christ. When the writer comes to pen the paragraph which serves as our lesson for today, he is ready to point out to his readers, and through them to all of us, the real place that faith has in the lives of the Lord's people.

The Golden Text

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love." Much of that which is contained in the epistles of the New Testament was written to show the people of that day the difference between the Mosaic and Christian systems, and also to inform them that the Gentiles were also included in the gospel plan of salvation. This is especially true of Galatians from which the golden text is taken. The Judaizing teachers not only wanted the Galatians to return to the law of Moses, but also to require the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity to submit to circumcision. It seems that the Galatian churches were made up largely of Gentile converts.

Paul's vigorous attack which he made on the Judaizers regarding these people is detailed in the Book of Galatians; and it is in this book that we have one of the clearest distinctions between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ on record. (Gal. 3: 15; 4: 7.) The verses immediately preceding the golden text say, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumci-

sion, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness." (Gal. 5: 2-5.) This is a clear-cut statement, and Paul's conclusion is that in God's sight there is absolutely no difference between a circumcised Jew and an uncircumcised Gentile; there is no merit in either condition. The thing which counts under the new dispensation is faith working through love.

The purpose of James in the lesson now before us is not to consider faith from the standpoint of its academic meaning, but rather with a view to its practical application in everyday living. He boldly affirms that the faith which pleases God is more than a mere statement of that to which one is willing to give his mental assent. *The faith which counts in God's sight must be reduced to a way of life.* No ideals have been tenable for long unless they were reduced to a way of life; and that is true of the ideal set forth in the gospel. When men begin to see that faith works, achieves results, and changes people, they will soon adopt it as their own way of living.

The Text Explained

The Proposition Stated (James 2: 14)

What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? "That faith" is faith without works, and James asks, "Can that faith save

him?" This is the proposition for discussion in this lesson. It appears that James was particularly combating the common tendency to substitute a lifeless assent to the truth of the gospel for real conversion and zealous obedience to that which they

professed to believe. Many religious people, down through the ages, have sought to discredit James by endeavoring to show that there was a basic difference between him and Paul over faith and works. (Eph. 2: 9.) But the truth of the matter is that James was not opposing Paul, but was opposing those who were abusing Paul's teaching.

Although both James and Paul were inspired writers, it is necessary to keep in mind that they were dealing with two entirely different situations. Paul had in mind meritorious works, the kind which no human being could perform, while James was discussing works of obedience, or those authorized by the gospel of Christ. (Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26.) If this distinction is kept in mind, it will be seen that both James and Paul were in perfect agreement regarding the subject of faith and works.

The Issue Clearly Drawn (James 2: 15-20)

If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? This is an illustration taken from life, something which any observer might see almost any day. If a destitute brother or sister should be addressed in this manner by a person in the church, the needy one would no doubt expect to receive some assistance; for that alone would relieve the situation. When Peter and John were about to go into the temple, as recorded in the third chapter of Acts, they came to the place where a lame man was, "who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (Acts 3: 3-6.)

The conclusion drawn from the first illustration is expressed in these words, "*Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.*" Faith alone is as empty and worthless as the words addressed to the needy person

referred to in verses 15 and 16. Any one who is not blinded by a theory can easily follow James' reasoning.

Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith. Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder. This is James' second illustration, and in it he shows that faith, that is, conviction alone (Heb. 11: 6) will not suffice. Ruskin said that he never met with but one book in his life that was clear on the subject of works and faith, and that book is the Bible. In the letter in which this statement is found, Ruskin says further:

"Read the Bible on the subject of faith and works. And I think that you will come to the conclusion that though works are not the price of salvation, they are assuredly the way to it, and the only way. I do not mean the way in the sense in which Christ is the way, but the way in the sense of the strait gate. For Christ the door is not strait, and Christ the way not narrow. But the short of it is—Christ says—'When ye have done all that is commanded you, then say we are unprofitable servants.' He does not say—Do nothing that is commanded you, and all is right if you say you are unprofitable. Read the sermon on the mount. It is work, work, work, from beginning to end. And I believe all the divisions of Christians are caused by their hatred of the simple text—'Whoso heareth my words and doeth them.' The Romanists substitute paying and praying for doing; the Scotch, believing for doing; the English, reverence for doing; and so on. Plain taking up of the hard, heavy cross is the last thing with them all. Strive always to do—acknowledge continually that it is Christ which worketh in you, both to will and do. And you will soon know the doctrine whether it be of God."

When James says "Show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith," he is showing that works are the outcome of faith; they do not precede it. The faith which is not followed by works is dead; and the works which are not preceded by faith are unacceptable in the sight of

God. This order always affects the character of the works. The man who professes to produce works, but confesses that he has no faith, is trusting in his own ability, rather than in Christ the Saviour. Faith can only be demonstrated by doing that which has been commanded.

Faith is more than conviction; it is conviction plus confidence or trust. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is [conviction], and that he is a rewarder [confidence or trust] of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.) The demons are convicted or convinced that Jesus is God's Son (Luke 4: 33, 34), but they do not put their confidence in or trust him. So James' conclusion drawn from the second illustration is this, "*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?*"

The Testimony of the Scriptures (James 2: 21-26)

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. The case of Abraham is James' third illustration. See Gen. 15: 1-6; 22: 1-19; Rom. 4: 1-25. This statement by James is a divine commentary on the passages just cited, and he shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is no conflict between faith and works. Works are the evidence of faith, and faith has its necessary fruition in works; or, to state the matter as James does, works complete faith or make it perfect, that is, faith is fully consummated or developed by works. Such genuine faith is the only kind which is pleasing to God.

The conclusion drawn from this illustration is stated in these words: "*Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith*" This is the only place in the New Testament where "faith" and "only" are joined as they are here, that is, faith separated from works. This is the kind of faith James had in mind when he asked, "*Can that faith save him?*"

It is well to observe here that Martin Luther regarded the teaching of James as being in direct opposition to that of Paul. Here are the two points of view which Luther was unable to reconcile: "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." (Rom. 3: 28.) "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." (James 2: 24.) But when the background against which Paul and James wrote is taken into consideration, it will be relatively easy to see that there is no conflict between them. They were dealing with two different errors which were prevalent in their day.

Paul was contending against a self-righteous Pharisaism, which boasted of its works, and he vehemently denied that such works can secure man's justification. James, on the other hand, had before him the case of those who thought that a "barren orthodoxy" was sufficient, and they looked for justification because of the correctness of their creed. But to them he said that such a faith, apart from works, is dead.

When Martin Luther came to translate Rom. 3: 28, he inserted the word "only" following the term "faith," and made the passage read: "We reckon therefore that man is justified by faith *only* apart from the works of the law." This inexcusable action on the part of Luther led him to array Paul against James, and as a result he rejected the Book of James, holding that the entire epistle was without divine authority. And even to this day, denominational preachers in general, following in Luther's footsteps, pay no attention to James' affirmation which declares, "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." Thus the only passage in the entire New Testament which links "faith" and "only" together boldly declares that a man is NOT justified by faith only. But that inspired statement makes little or no difference with people who hold to the idea that salvation is by faith only. It does, however, illustrate the power of preconceived ideas.

The Apostle Paul is the most exhaustive writer of the New Testament on the subject of justification by faith; and his most elaborate treatise on that question is in his letter to the

Romans. In view of the emphasis which he placed on the subject, and the clarity with which he dealt with the issue, it is interesting to observe the fact that he opened and closed the Book of Romans with the expression "obedience of faith." See Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26.

The marginal reading in the two passages just cited is obedience "to the faith." The rendering in the Revised Standard Version is "to bring about obedience to the faith." This teaching, of course, makes impossible the idea of salvation by faith only. "Faith" and "obedience of faith" are not the same. The obedience of faith is the obedience which results from faith, or the obedience which faith produces. The gospel, according to Paul, was made known for this very purpose. (Rom. 16: 25, 26; 2 Thess. 1: 8; 1 Pet. 4: 17.) Both Paul and James therefore teach that the gospel must be obeyed, if salvation is to be enjoyed; and it is true, as both men plainly teach, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? This is the fourth illustration which James records to show that only faith which works is acceptable to God. The story of Rahab the harlot is found in Josh. 2: 1-21; 6: 22-25.

For as the body apart from the

spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead. This is the conclusion which follows the fourth illustration.

The emphasis in the section of James which forms the basis for our lesson today is not on the ground of salvation, but on the evidence of faith. No man can demonstrate that he has faith except by some form of action; and since our faith must be in the Lord, we can give evidence of it only by doing that which he commands us to do. In Mark 16: 15, 16, Jesus says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

When the believer is baptized, he gives evidence of his faith; for he is doing that which Jesus commands him to do. A concrete example of this principle is found in Acts 16: 30-34: "And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoice greatly, with all his house, *having believed in God*"

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is one of the chief characteristics of Christianity?

Why is faith so important?

Give a resume of the subject of faith as found in the first two chapters of James.

Against what background did he write?

The Golden Text

What was the occasion for much of the writing in the New Testament epistles?

For what specific purpose was Galatians written?

How does Paul show the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ?

What is the lesson of the golden text and its purpose?

What was James' purpose in discussing faith?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Proposition Stated

What did James mean by "that faith"?

What was the occasion for James' writing about faith and works?

Show that there is no basic difference between James and Paul regarding faith and works?

What is necessary to do in order to understand them both?

The Issue Clearly Drawn

How did James illustrate his teaching from daily living?

What conclusion did he draw from this? and why is faith without works dead?

What was the second illustration and what does it show?

What is the difference in works as the price of salvation and works as the way to salvation?

Why do so many people try to substitute something else for the works which God has ordained for those who are acceptable to him?

What is the basic relation between faith and works in God's sight?

How does James show that more is needed than simple conviction?

The Testimony of the Scriptures

What was James' third illustration?
 How do works make faith perfect? and
 what does this mean?
 Why did Martin Luther think that James
 contradicted Paul?
 Against what background did each of these
 inspired men write?
 What effect of Luther's position is seen
 today among preachers?

How does Paul express himself regarding
 faith and works?
 What is the difference between "faith"
 and "the obedience of faith"?
 What was James' fourth illustration?
 What conclusion was drawn from it?
 Where did James place the emphasis in
 his discussion of faith and works?
 How alone can people give evidence of
 their faith in Christ?

Lesson V—November 2, 1958

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

Lesson Text

James 3: 1-10

1 Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment.

2 For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also.

3 Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also.

4 Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willet.

5 So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by so small a fire!

Golden Text.—*"For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed"* (James 3: 16.)

Devotional Reading.—James 3: 11-18.

Daily Bible Readings

October 27. M.....Pleasant Words As a Honeycomb (Prov. 16: 21-24)
 October 28. T.....Grievous Words Stir Up Anger (Prov. 15: 1-28)
 October 29. W.....Speaking the Word (Psalm 119: 13, 27, 54)
 October 30. F.....Words of a Talebearer (Prov. 26: 20-28)
 October 31. S.....Six Things the Lord Hates (Prov. 6: 16-19)
 November 1. S.....Mischief of the Tongue (Psalm 52: 1-4)
 November 2. S.....A Fool Is Full of Words (Eccles. 10: 1-14)

Time.—Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

Place.—The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

Persons.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

The "tongue," as used in this lesson means the organ of speech, and, as James points out, the influence which it is capable of exercising is far-reaching indeed. There is no other member of our body which is capable

of affecting more people for weal or for woe as is the tongue. The description which James gives of the tongue has not been surpassed in any language. "And the tongue is a fire: the world of inquiry among our

members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison."

In the first chapter of the book we are now studying, James gave some instruction regarding real religion, namely, hearing and doing that which God commands. In 1: 19 he said, "But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." We should always be eager to hear that which inspiration has spoken, but extremely cautious about what we say regarding it. A glib tongue can, and often does, counteract the good influence which the word of God is capable of exerting. And when James comes to illustrate that which

he said regarding the necessity of being a faithful doer of the word, he says, "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. (James 1: 26.)

This last quoted passage makes it clear that one of the greatest lessons we can learn is that of controlling the tongue; for if that is not done, all the other good which we may accomplish will be as nothing; for religion is vain if the tongue is not controlled. The effect of our words on our standing before God is emphasized in the New Testament over and over again. Jesus, for example, said, "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. 12: 36, 37.)

The Golden Text

"For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed" The word "jealousy," both in the original and in its translated form, is used in both a good and a bad sense. In the good sense, the meaning is zeal and ardor, as when Paul said to the Corinthians, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy." (2 Cor. 11: 2.) This, of course, is not the sense in which James uses the term now before us.

Jealousy, in the bad sense, is often compared with envy: in fact: the two words are frequently used as synonyms. They are not in the strict sense of the term very close synonyms, but they do come into comparison "because they both carry as their basic meaning that of grudging another's possession of something desirable." (Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms.) Envy stresses the coveting of that which belongs to another, such as riches and attainments. Jealousy, on the other hand, emphasizes intolerance of any rival for the possession of something which he re-

gards as being particularly his own. This, as has already been pointed out, may be in a good or in a bad sense. It is when jealousy takes the wrong direction that it becomes sinful. (Rom. 13: 13; 2 Cor. 12: 20; Gal. 5: 20.)

When jealousy and faction are linked together, sin is the inevitable result. The basic meaning of the original word for *faction* is strife or contentiousness. Originally it referred to a candidate for office who employed intrigue and low arts to influence enough people in his favor to swing the election. James uses the word in the sense of a partisan who, by any means available, seeks to draw others after him. This kind of conduct always confuses the innocent, and those who engage in the practice usually employ every kind of vicious scheme to attain their end. This, of course, is foreign to the spirit of Christ. The Lord's people should seek to unite the body of Christ (Eph. 4: 3), and not endeavor to divide it. (Gal. 5: 12.)

The Text Explained

Regarding the Great
Responsibility of Teachers
(James 3: 1, 2)

Be not many of you teachers, my

brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment. At first thought, one might think that this statement is in opposition to the one

made in Heb. 5: 12, which says, "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food." But James appears to be giving a warning regarding the great responsibility upon those who undertake to instruct others in the word of God.

Anyone who puts himself forward as a teacher of others incurs a responsibility which is not to be lightly esteemed. Teaching God's word is not something which should be done without thorough preparation; for the teacher is dealing with immortal souls. He should make sure that he understands that about which he is talking. There are too many people who fail to realize the seriousness of teaching, and who fail to understand that they themselves must know what the Scriptures say before they have the right even to an opinion regarding their meaning. Such people should always keep before them the injunction of James to "be swift to hear, slow to speak."

There are people who find religion an interesting subject to discuss, and they do not hesitate to express freely, and sometimes arrogantly, any thoughts which may have occurred to them, without recognizing that their responsibility is any greater than it would be if they were discussing current events. And, too, there are those who have strong convictions about almost every question of duty, or of religion; and they do not feel that they are running any risk of error in giving expression to their views regarding them. And if some one doesn't agree with them, their tongues become unruly and wrathful. They should remember that James says that we should be slow to wrath: "for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Yes, the responsibility of the teacher of God's word is great.

For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same as a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. The word "stumble" is used in the sense of making a mistake, falling into error, or committing sin; and James says that that is true of all of us, that is,

we all make mistakes, fall into error, and sin regarding many things. Now, if anyone has reached the point where he never does anything wrong while speaking, that is, he never says anything which he should not say, that person is perfect, and has his whole body under control. James, however, did not think very much of a claim like that, and he, accordingly, gave his warning regarding the great responsibility which rests upon teachers.

Anyone who makes a mistake in teaching is in danger of leading someone astray; and when a thoughtful person considers that possibility, he will be more cautious regarding the matter of teaching others. This is not to say that a Christian ought not to aspire to be a teacher of God's word, but it does mean that he will try to realize something of the responsibility in which such a work will involve him.

The Relative Strength of the Tongue (James 3: 3-6)

Now, if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also. The bridle-bit which is very small, in comparison with the horse, is placed into the horse's mouth, and that simple device known as the bridle, the entire body of the horse is controlled. This is one of the simple illustrations for which the writing of James is noted. No one who reads it and the others to follow can miss the point which he intended to make.

Behold, the ships also, though they are so great, and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth. Notwithstanding the greatness of the ship and the roughness of the wind, the entire vessel is controlled by a very small instrument known as a rudder, that is, an oar which was worked by a handle. Vincent quotes Dean Howson as saying that "there is more imagery drawn from mere natural phenomena in the one short epistle of James than in all of St. Paul's epistles put together." The graphic manner in which James presents his illustrations gives the impression that he was presenting the

results of his own personal observations.

So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! In the two preceding illustrations, James emphasized the smallness of that which is the most effective in its influence. The bridle is small in comparison with the horse, but it is the bridle that is the means of controlling the horse. The same is true with the rudder and the ship. In the verse now before us, James begins the application of the principle which he has been illustrating. The tongue is small in comparison with the body, or even with other members of the body, but its influence is far-reaching. This is further illustrated by the fact that a small spark of fire is capable of starting a conflagration which will consume a mighty forest.

And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. The tongue, that is, the power of speech, is that which distinguishes man above the brute creation; and there is no way to measure the influence of words which are fitly spoken. A single speech can sometimes accomplish more than an army. In fact, there are some speeches which may very properly be described as events, as the turning points in the affairs of nations. Sometimes words are set to music and their influence have moved men to destroy ancient and seemingly all-powerful wrongs, and to substitute in their places new standards for right doing.

But James, in the passage now before us, is dealing with the possibilities of evil of which the tongue is capable. "Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! And the tongue is a fire." One of the most common ways that evil is done by speech is that of idle gossip. The Bible itself has much to say about this terrible evil. For example, the evil tongue is described as a whetted sword, or as the poison of asp under the tongue. It is like the hidden assassin who shoots his arrows in the dark.

Someone has described gossip in

these words: "I am more deadly than the screaming shell from a howitzer; I ruin without killing. I tear down homes; I break hearts and wreck lives. I have no respect for truth or justice, no mercy for the defenseless. You will find me in the pews of the pious and the haunts of the unholy. I am wily, cunning, malicious, and I gather strength with age. I make my way where greed, mistrust, and dishonor are unknown. I feed on good and bad alike. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea and often as innocent. I never forgive and seldom forget. My name is gossip."

There are two basic reasons why people should exercise great care in their judgment on others, that is, on their willingness to speak unfavorably of them. The first reason is their possible ignorance as to the real facts and motives in the case. The story is told of a dog which was the companion and guardian of a small child. One day they both disappeared for a long time. A search for them was made in the forest, but no trace of either was found. At length the dog came home, all stained with blood. The family immediately took for granted that the dog had reverted to his savage state and had killed the child; and they shot the dog to death. Then a day or two later the child was found unharmed in the forest, and near it was the mangled body of a panther which the faithful dog had killed in his defense of the child. The circumstantial evidence was against the dog, but the judgment based upon that evidence was proved false by the facts in the case.

The second reason for exercising care in that which we say about others was stated by Jesus himself. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you." (Matt. 7: 1, 2.)

Gossip, of course, is bad, but it is not nearly so harmful as false teaching; and this last is probably what Jesus is emphasizing. False teaching will, if accepted, result in the condemnation of the soul, and that is the worst thing that can happen to anyone. The tongue not only is capable of defiling the whole body.

but also the whole course or round of our existence; and the origin of the fire is hell itself. James is the only person in the New Testament to use the word which is translated "hell," other than Jesus. Jesus used the term eleven times, and James once.

The Untamable Character of the Tongue (James 3: 7-10)

For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind; but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison. This is a terrible indictment against the tongue. The skill of man can bring into obedience the lower orders of nature, but he cannot, unaided, control his tongue. It is a restless, that is, an uncontrollable or an unrestrainable, evil; it is full of death-bringing poison. These are the full consequences of an uncontrolled tongue.

No one can arrest a calumnious

tongue, any more than he can arrest the calumny itself. A slanderer may be refuted and his slander traced to its source; the author of the slander may be exposed to the extent that a repetition of the offense may appear impossible; but the fatal habit of slander is incorrigible; tomorrow the tongue will be at work again. Furthermore, the consequences of the slander cannot be stopped; for the name of the victim will often arouse associations in the mind of one who heard the calumny, but who did not know of its refutation, or who had

only a vague recollection of the whole affair, and he doubtfully asks the question, "But were there not some suspicious circumstances connected with him?" Thus the death-dealing work continues.

Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. This is an example of the inconsistency of most people who claim to be religious: they praise God and denounce his people who were made in his likeness. This is an inconsistency which God will not overlook. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also." (1 John 4: 20, 21; Matt. 25: 45.)

No man who claims to be a Christian has the right to curse his fellow men. Paul says regarding those who persecute us, that we are to bless, and curse not. "Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not." (Rom. 12: 14.) Man was made in God's image, and he wants all men to be saved. It is the duty of every child of God therefore to maintain a relationship toward his fellow men, all of them, which will enable him to exert an influence for good upon them, whenever the opportunity presents itself. If we do something to alienate them, we erect a barrier between them and us which may be difficult to overcome.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the principal purpose of the tongue as used in this lesson?

How does the tongue compare in influence with other members of the body?

How does the discussion regarding the tongue fit into James' instruction concerning real religion?

Why should people be slow to speak?

What is your idea of the importance of controlling the tongue? Give reasons for your answer.

The Golden Text

What is the meaning of jealousy and how is it used in the Bible?

What is the difference between jealousy and envy?

When does jealousy become sinful?

What does James mean by faction and what should the Christian's attitude be toward it?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Regarding the Great Responsibility of Teachers

Does James contradict Heb. 5: 12 with respect to the duty of teaching? Give reasons for your answer.

Why is the responsibility of the teacher so great?

How does James' caution about being slow to speak fit into this lesson?

Why do so many people find pleasure in discussing religious issues?

What does James mean when he says that in many things we all stumble?

Does he imply that he thinks teachers are perfect? Give reasons for your answer.

Why is it so serious for a teacher to make a mistake?
Should all Christians aspire to be teachers of God's word?

The Relative Strength of the Tongue

How does James illustrate this section of the lesson? and what is the point of his illustration?

How does he apply the principle which he illustrated?

In what way is the tongue a fire?

What does the power of speech do for man?

What particular thing is James dealing with in this part of his letter?

What is one of the most common ways of misusing the tongue?

Why is gossip so common?

Why should people exercise great care in their judgment on others?

What often happens when people are ignorant of the facts and motives in the case?

What great lesson did Jesus give in this connection?

What did James say that the tongue is capable of doing? Does this include false teaching? Give reasons for your answer.

What is set on fire by hell?

The Untamable Character of the Tongue

What indictment does James bring against the tongue?

In what sense is it a restless evil and full of deadly poison?

Why is it impossible to arrest calumny or prevent its consequence from spreading?

What great inconsistency does James point out in connection with the tongue? and how does God regard it?

Lesson VI—November 9, 1958

THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE

Lesson Text

James 3: 11-18

11 Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet *water* and bitter?

12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither *can* salt water yield sweet.

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth.

Golden Text.—*"But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"* (Gal. 5: 16.)

Devotional Heading.—Rom. 12: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

November 3. M..... Life Eternal to Know God (John 17: 1-8)

November 4. T..... Wisdom Better than Gold (Prov. 16: 16-24)

November 5. W..... Wisdom under the Sun (Eccles. 9: 13-18)

November 6. T. Wise Men Lay up Knowledge (Prov. 10: 8-23)

November 7. F. Fear of the Lord Beginning of Wisdom (Psalm 111: 1-10)

November 8. S..... Value of Wisdom (Job 28: 12-28)

November 9. S..... Wisdom of God Spoken by Apostles (1 Cor. 2: 6-15)

Time.—Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

Place.—The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

Persons.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

In the first chapter of James, as we saw in our study there, the writer of this epistle gave some instruction regarding the ideal life, as it is developed by means of the manifold

trials which come upon us. And after pointing out the value of the temptations which come to us, he then went on to show how we may obtain divine aid if the trials become too

great for us to meet successfully. He said, "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (James 1: 5.) This is the wisdom that is from above.

We shall have a better understanding of this lesson, if we first get a clear idea of the meaning of wisdom. Wisdom is not knowledge, as that term is generally understood. Knowledge is all that the mind knows, from whatever sources it may be derived or obtained, or by whatever process. Wisdom on the other hand, has been defined as the right use of knowledge. Wisdom therefore presupposes knowledge for its very existence and exercise. "Wisdom is mental power acting upon the materials that fullest knowledge gives in the most effective way." If we do our best to gain the knowledge we need, we can then go to God in prayer for the wisdom

which will enable us to meet any situation in the proper manner.

"Some one has said that we pass through three periods or stages in our intellectual growth. There is the early period when we think that we know everything; and a succeeding period when we seem to know but little; and then a period in which, through much sorrow and disappointment, we have won sufficient knowledge to understand something of ourselves and our surroundings. But when we are called upon to meet the inevitable trials of life, with their claims for prompt action and satisfactory decision, we are often terrified at our lack of wisdom—our lack of the ability to use our knowledge aright, or to apply the facts and principles which we possess to the varied situations which we have to deal with from day to day. It is then that we need wisdom from above, and James tells us to ask God for it.

The Golden Text

"Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" To walk by the Spirit is to walk as the Spirit directs through the inspired word of God. The Holy Spirit is usually spoken of as the third person in the Godhead. Jehovah himself is the source of all things (2 Cor. 5: 18), but he has seen fit to manifest himself through his Word (see John 1: 1) and through his Spirit. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1: 14; Heb. 10: 5); but the Spirit has never had a body of flesh.

Jesus was manifested in the flesh in order to become the Saviour of men, and it appears that it is the special office of the Holy Spirit to bring to fulfillment in human experience the whole meaning of Jesus Christ as God's Son and the world's Redeemer. The Spirit does his work through the inspired message which is contained in the New Testament.

(John 16: 12-14. Paul says, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

The flesh and the Spirit are diametrically opposed to each other, and it is utterly impossible for anyone to follow them both at the same time. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5: 17; Rom. 7: 14-25.) The only possible way for one to avoid the ways of the flesh is to walk as the Spirit directs through his message to mankind, that is, through that which is said in the New Testament. (Gal. 5: 16-26; Rom. 8: 1-9.)

The Text Explained

A Lesson from the
Stability of Nature
(James 3: 11, 12)

Doth a fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither

can salt water yield sweet. In the preceding verses, 9 and 10, James pointed out the inconsistent action of the tongue: "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: out of the same

mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." Such action is self-contradictory, and is wholly out of harmony with God's will concerning the use to be made of the tongue. It is always well to keep in mind the effect which our speech will have on our final destiny. Jesus says, "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. 12: 36, 37.)

The lesson in the opening verses of our text for today emphasizes the harmony of the natural creation, and shows that such inconsistency as is manifested by the tongue is wholly impossible in the natural realm. Instead, like causes always produce like results. All nature is under fixed and immovable law, and one can always depend upon the harvest being like the seed which was sown.

But when man who is endowed with will power breaks away from God and his law he becomes unnatural and does those things which are contrary to God, nature, and his own well-being. Therefore, every time a person speaks that which he should not he is demonstrating that he is out of harmony with the will of God. When a person becomes destitute of the unity which God has ordained for his people, he does those things which are inconsistent and contradictory. He becomes double-tongued, with the result that out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. Does anyone wonder, then, that James condemned this vice so vehemently.

If Christians would only stop and think, they would soon realize that there is no medicine so healing amid the troubles of this world as that which is made possible by a tongue which is given to the praise of God and the good of man. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in network of silver." (Prov. 25: 11.) "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but a grievous word stirreth up anger. The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out folly." (Prov. 15: 1, 2.) "A gentle tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a

breaking of the spirit." (Prov. 15: 4.) Therefore, "let the words of my mouth . . . be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer." (Psalm 19: 14.)

**"By Their Fruits
Ye Shall Know Them"**
(James 3: 13-16)

Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. It is not out of place to say that James is the most practical of all the writers of the New Testament, and that which he says here may be regarded as an appeal to the self-respect of his readers. It is one thing for a person to claim to have wisdom and understanding, but quite another to be able to demonstrate that fact in actual living. The writer of the epistle now before us has just showed something of the harmony which exists in nature, a harmony so complete that like causes produce like results; and now he insists that the same principle is true with reference to wisdom and understanding; if one really has them his life will be an example of the humility which is born of true wisdom.

But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. It was pointed out in the previous lesson that jealousy is used in the New Testament in both a good and a bad sense. Its use in a particular place will have to be determined by the context. In the instance now before us jealousy is joined with faction, and that shows that it is used in a bad sense. Inasmuch as the heart is the source of the speech—for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh—, the condition of the heart will determine the nature of the speech.

If there is jealousy and faction in the heart, then the speech proceeds from it cannot be pleasing to God. The expression "jealousy and faction" implies that such brethren were striving against each other, instead of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4: 3.) Rivalry among brethren is never acceptable to God; and if that condition exists and they boast of their service to him, they are only lying against the truth, that is,

they are acting a lie, since they are in opposition to the truth. God knows the heart of every person, and no one can deceive him. (Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. We learn from James 1: 5 that God gives wisdom to those who need it to help them overcome temptation, so that they can lead the ideal life; and we are further told in James 1: 17 that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. All such wisdom therefore is in harmony with God and his revealed will. But a wisdom which is characterized by jealousy and faction did not come from God; for he "is not a God of confusion, but of peace." Such wisdom is *earthly*, that is, human as opposed to heavenly, *sensual*, that is, unregenerated or natural (Jude 19 describes the sensual as those "having not the Spirit," [Rom. 8: 5-9]), *devilish*, that is, it came from hell instead of from above. This should be a powerful warning to those brethren who strive against each other.

For *where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.* This is the fruit of a wisdom which is characterized by jealousy and faction, and such a criterion never fails to reveal its true nature. The term "confusion" suggests disorder or unruliness, such as might be found in a general insurrection or a tumultuous anarchy. (2 Cor. 12: 20.) The word "vile" is the opposite of good and the idea is that such wisdom leads to conditions which are contrary to God's will. (John 3: 20.)

The Characteristics of True Wisdom (James 3: 17, 18)

But 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. The term "first" emphasizes the essential nature of this wisdom; the other qualities are simply the outgrowth of this primary quality. If this wisdom were not pure, it would be impossible for it to have the other distinguishing marks. Westcott says that the term "pure" suggests the notion of shrinking from contamination, or a delicate

sensibility to pollution of any kind. The conscience of even the best people is too often lacking in sensitiveness; they avoid, indeed, the grosser sins, but they have no fine and subtle sense which recognizes sins of a less flagrant kind. They live too close to the line which separates good from evil. They try to keep their garments free from dark and ugly stains, but they fail to remember that the saved in the city of God will be clothed in robes of the purest white.

The religion of Christ is a religion of peace, in the truest sense of that word, and he expects his people to strive for the peace which passes all understanding. This is not a peace at any price, or a peace based upon a faulty foundation; it is a peace which comes from doing that which God commands. Therefore, the wisdom which comes from above is characterized by peace, and those who have it are peaceable men. It is possible for a person to ascertain whether or not the wisdom he has came from God by asking a few simple questions. Does it make him contentious and aggressive? When he tries to get some one to receive a truth which that person regards with suspicion, can he control himself and make his would-be convert feel that he has a deep interest in his welfare, and that he dreads bitterness and ill-temper as much as he dreads the power of error itself? Does he teach, or does he fight?

The word "gentle" carries with it the idea of forbearance or making allowances for others. Aristotle contrasts the idea contained in "gentle" with strict justice. It is better, according to his view of the matter, to look to the lawgiver and not to the law, to the spirit and not to the letter, to the intention and not to the action, to the whole and not to the part, to the character of the actor in the long-run and not in the present moment, to remember good rather than evil, and good which one has received rather than good which one has done, to put up with injurious treatment, to wish to settle a matter by words rather than by deeds, to prefer arbitration to judgment. Our whole object should be to win one to a better life, rather than simply to condemn.

The wisdom which is from above

is easy to be entreated or approachable. It describes a temper which is the opposite of self-will, self-assertion, and obstinacy. The person possessing this wisdom is one who can be reasoned with, one who is willing to listen to the views of others. If there is an estrangement between him and someone else, he is the kind of person who will give the other party a chance to try to heal the breach. He will not manifest the I-am-right and you-are-wrong attitude. He may, indeed he should, feel that he is right, but he will recognize that there is another side to the controversy.

The term "mercy" has two aspects, namely, the alleviation of suffering and the forgiveness of wrongs; it is to have compassion and pity. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy;" and James declares that "judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment." (Matt. 5: 7; James 2: 13.) The man with wisdom from on high is a merciful man, and he has the good deeds or the fruits to demonstrate that fact. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a good commentary on this passage. See also Matt. 25: 31-46.

The same original term for "variance" is translated "doubting" in James 1:6. A man without variance, therefore, is a man who is unwavering. He has certain principles by which his life is guided. The man who is guided by divine wisdom looks upon human affairs from divine heights. The compass which guides his course is not deflected by the attraction of self-interest, or by the varying currents of prevailing opin-

ions. He judges men today, as he judged them yesterday, unless he has learned new facts about them which require him to modify his judgment. He does not show favor to the rich, nor despise the poor. He maintains that true consistency which comes from his devotion to the high and lofty principles by which human conviction and human conduct should be governed.

To be without hypocrisy is to be free from insincerity. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be that which he is not, and hypocrisy is the result of his action. The wisdom which comes from beneath may often make a man a hypocrite. It may lead him to flatter those whom he dislikes, to profess interest in certain ideas for which he has no conviction, to affect generosity and public spirit, when he is seeking only personal gain; but the man who has the wisdom which comes from above always takes God into account, and to him hypocrisy is impossible.

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace. Phillips renders this verse in these words: "And the wise are peace-makers who go on quietly for a harvest of righteousness—in other people and in themselves." Peace-makers not only endeavor to reconcile those who are estranged, but they also *cultivate* peace. The fruit of righteousness is continually being sown in peace for such people. Peace and righteousness belong together and they are the result of that wisdom which is from above, just as confusion and every vile deed are the result of that wisdom which comes from the evil one. The course of the Christian is clear, and his reward is unmistakable.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What is the wisdom which is from above?
How did James introduce it in his epistle?
What is the meaning of the word "wisdom"? and how is it related to knowledge?
How may one be sure that he has this wisdom?

The Golden Text

What does it mean to walk by the Spirit?
Who or what is the Spirit?
What is the special office of the Spirit

today? and how does he accomplish his work?
What does it mean to fulfill the lusts of the flesh?
How important is it for one to live in the Spirit?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

A Lesson from the Stability of Nature
What was the occasion for James' writing this statement regarding the stability of nature?
Why is the tongue so inconsistent?
What effect will our words have on our destiny?
What effect do good words have on others?

"By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them"

How does the style of James compare with other New Testament writers?
 How may one know that he is wise and understanding?
 Why is such a criterion necessary?
 What does he say about those who have bitter jealousy and faction in their hearts?
 How do they lie against the truth?
 What does the expression "jealously and faction" imply?
 How may one know that jealousy and faction are in the heart?
 What kind of wisdom does one like that have? and how does James describe it?
 What do the terms "earthly, sensual, devilish" mean?
 What are the fruits of jealousy and faction?
 What is meant by "confusion and every vile deed"?

The Characteristics of True Wisdom

How does James describe the wisdom that is from above?
 What does he mean by saying that it is *first* pure? and what does that term imply?
 How is peace related to this wisdom?
 What is the meaning of "gentle" and what is its application here?
 What does it mean for one to be easily entreated?
 What is the meaning of mercy and good fruits? and how may one be full of them?
 What is it to be without variance? and what makes this possible?
 What is hypocrisy and why would one want to be a hypocrite?
 What is the fruit of righteousness?
 How is it sown in peace for them that make peace?
 How is it related to the wisdom that is from above?

Lesson VII—November 16, 1958

WARNINGS AGAINST COVETOUSNESS AND PRIDE

Lesson Text

James 4: 1-10

1 Whence *come* wars and whence *come* fightings among you? *come* they not hence, *even* of your pleasures that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures.

4 Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.

5 Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit

which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

7 Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 13: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 5: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

November 10. M.	..... Evils of Covetousness (Hab. 2: 5-9)
November 11. T.	..... Treasure in Heaven (Matt. 6: 19-21)
November 12. W.	..... Covetousness Forbidden (Ex. 20: 17.)
November 13. T.	..... A Temptation and a Snare (1 Tim. 6: 9-11)
November 14. F.	..... Beware of Covetousness (Luke 12: 15-34)
November 15. S.	..... Fallen through Pride (Isa. 14: 12-16)
November 16. S.	..... Pride of Moab (Jer. 48: 7-29)

Time.—Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

PLACE.—The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

When one begins to read the Bible carefully and thoughtfully, he will soon see that a great part of it is given to warning against sin and the evil one. This is true (1) because man in his fallen state is inclined to wrong-doing, and (2) because "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5: 8.) God, as a loving heavenly Father, does not want any of his children to be lost; and it is for this reason that he is always seeking to bring them into and keep them in the right way.

Any thoughtful and sincere person is always grateful for the warnings of the Bible; for he realizes that they are signals to keep him out of danger. If there were no danger, there would be no warnings; but since there are grave dangers con-

fronting every responsible person in the world, we should be doubly thankful that we have access to those loving reminders of the dangers ahead.

The warnings of God to his people are found in his revealed will to man, and it is the solemn duty of every proclaimer of that word to call attention to and emphasize those warnings. An example of the principle by which this is done, as well as the responsibility of the preacher in connection with them, is found in Ezek. 3: 16-21. Paul told the Ephesian elders that he was "pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20: 26, 27.) The next four verses of that chapter record an example of the warning he gave them. (2 Tim. 3; Luke 12: 4, 5; Heb. 12: 25.)

The Text Explained

"*Thou shalt not covet.*" The prohibition given here is the same as the tenth commandment of the Decalogue. This fact shows that the sin of covetousness has been a basic sin of God's people on down through the ages. Both Testaments condemn covetousness in no uncertain terms. Paul calls it idolatry. "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and *covetousness, which is idolatry.*" (Col. 3: 5.) This same apostle makes it plain in 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10 that no idolater shall inherit the kingdom of God. His language there is as follows:

"Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor *idolaters*, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor *covetous*, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the

kingdom of God." The testimony of Christ himself is found in Rev. 21: 8: "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and *idolaters*, and all liars [Acts 5: 1-11], their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

That which has just been said should certainly be enough to cause every thoughtful person to desire to know what it means to covet, and to take the necessary precaution against its practice. The lesson before us today deals with this sin, along with pride and other evils which were common in the days of James, and which are still common among professed Christians now. Our study today therefore is vital to Christian living, and we all should enter into a consideration of the text with open hearts and receptive minds.

The Golden Text

The Source of Conflict among Christians

Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? In the preceding paragraph (James 3: 13-

18) James contrasted the wisdom which is from above with that which is from below, and he concluded by saying that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace." And with that in mind, it is easy to see that the question he

asks in the verse now before us is a very natural one. If all Christians possessed the wisdom which God gives to his children who ask for It, there would be no such conditions as those which are described in the first part of chapter 4.

Many Bible students find it very difficult to believe that James addressed the words of our text today to the Christians to whom he spoke in the first part of the epistle. The picture which is presented is indeed a dark one, but it is not necessary to assume that every member of the body of Christ was equally guilty. One has only to read Paul's letters to the Corinthians in order to see how far some brethren can depart from the way of righteousness. See also the letters to the seven churches in Asia.

James' purpose here is to show the real source of the conflicts among them. "Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members?" The "pleasures" are the manifestations of their selfish desires, and in a practical sense, they amount to one's having his own way. Jesus says that the cares and riches and pleasures of this life choke the word, with the result that no fruit is borne. (Luke 8: 14.) It was pointed out in James 1: 14, 15 that one's lust is the source or cause of temptation. "But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death."

The word "war" suggests the struggle of the passions within the human soul, or within the various members of the body, as James has it. "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (1 Pet. 2: 11.) These evil "members" are detailed at length in Col. 3: 5-11, where Paul says that they are to be put to death. As long as these "pleasures" are allowed to have their own way in the lives of individual Christians, the result is that they are, in effect, conducting a campaign (as soldiers) against the interests of others, while seeking to advance their own selfish desires. Such people do not seem to realize that while they are warring against others, they are

actually warring against themselves, as well as against the Lord.

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. The word for "lust" in this verse is a different one from pleasures of verse 1. Here the idea is that the mind or heart is eagerly set on something, but desire alone does not bring about possession. So, ye kill, covet, fight, and war, but that does not accomplish your desires either. The killing and fighting were probably not literal acts, but their unholy attitudes and actions had the effect of murder. John declares that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (1 John 3: 15.)

The word for "covet" in this passage is rendered "are jealous" in the margin. The word literally means to be filled with jealousy or envy toward someone because of something which that individual possesses; and as long as that attitude continues, it will eventually break out in some unholy act. The usual word for "covet" (Rom. 7:7; 13: 9) is translated "lust" in this verse. When used in a bad sense, it means an unlawful desire for that which is another's, a desire which, if strong enough, may lead to sinful means to obtain it.

After pointing out their failure to obtain that which they desired by unrighteousness means, James shows that they did not have because they had failed to use the God appointed means for obtaining: "ye have not, because ye ask not." This, of course, refers to prayer. (James 1: 5.) The promises of God are to those who pray, not to those who fight and covet. The fact that James introduces prayer is sufficient evidence to show that he was writing to Christians; for those who are not in covenant relationship with God are not encouraged to pray.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss that ye may spend it in your pleasures. While prayer is the privilege of every child of God, we must all remember that there are definite conditions which must be met, before we have the right to expect an answer. One of those conditions is that we must be actuated by the right motive when we pray. That is the lesson here. (James 5: 16b-18; 1 Kings 18: 36, 37.) This

last passage shows the motive Elijah had for praying regarding the rain. To spend that which they asked in their pleasures would be to spend it in the exercise of their pleasures, or as their pleasures dictated.

God Demands Undivided Allegiance

(James 4: 4-6)

Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. These unfaithful Christians are addressed as "adulteresses" because of the well known Bible figure which regards them as being married to the Lord. (Isa. 54: 5; 2 Cor. 11: 2.) The marginal reading is "who break your marriage vow to God." Therefore, whosoever is "minded" or desires to be a friend of the world constitutes himself an enemy of God; just as any upright husband would be displeased if his wife longed to be the paramour of another man.

The fact that whosoever "would be," that is, whosoever is minded to be or desires to be a friend of the world, *makes*, that is, constitutes, himself an enemy of God, shows that essential worldliness is a state of the mind rather than the doing of certain things, or being in certain places. Character cannot be rightfully judged by single or isolated deeds, either good or bad. It is the trend of one's life which determines his destiny. When men and women are engrossed by the material things of life, then, it matters not how punctual their formal religion is, they are worldly. And those men and women who, despite their manifold mistakes, still reckon with God and take seriously the teaching of Jesus are spiritual.

Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying? This passage must be explained in the light of the general context in which it is found. James was writing to some Christians who were mixed up with the world, and who seemed to think that they could serve God and walk in the ways of the world at the same time. He, accordingly, asks them how they could expect anything else except fightings among them and unanswered prayers. He tells them that

they will have to return to God, if they expect him to be near them. They could do this only by cleansing their hands and purifying their hearts.

James shows in the preceding verse that God will not tolerate any attachment to the world on the part of his people, and then he asks, *Is the testimony of the scripture in vain, when it asks, Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?* The spirit which he made to dwell in us is the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19, 20.) This Spirit does not long unto envying, as the ones to whom James wrote were doing, and that is proof that they were not walking by the Spirit. The Spirit produces a very different kind of fruit. (Gal. 5: 22, 23.) The apparent purpose of James in this verse was to show the worldly status of his readers, in the light of the affirmation of verse 4.

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. The term "but" at the beginning of this sentence introduces a contrast. Not only does God not give us a spirit which longs unto envying, a spirit which would lead us away from him; but instead, he gives more grace. (Heb. 4: 14-16.) James again quotes a passage of scripture in support of his statement, although he does not identify the source of the quotation, either here or in verse 5. It is possible that the quotation in verse 6 is from Prov. 3: 34. (1 Pet. 5: 5.) The fact that God gave sufficient grace to his people to meet all their needs is proof that he is willing to help them to live as he directs. (2 Cor. 12: 9.) But he always resists the proud and self-sufficient, that is, the people who feel that they can live without him.

The Lord's Way to Victory

(James 4: 7-10)

Be subject therefore unto God, but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. When it is said that God *resisteth* the proud, the idea is based on military strategy, and it is as if he had said, God sets himself in array against the proud. Pride calls out the armies of God, and it is no wonder that the Bible says that pride goeth before destruction. (Prov. 16:

18.) But the word for "resist" in this verse is a different word. The meaning here is to withstand. (Gal. 2: 11; 2 Tim. 3: 8; 1 Pet. 5: 9.)

Inasmuch as God and the devil are diametrically opposed to each other, it is utterly impossible to have fellowship with both at the same time. It appears that the point of emphasis here is the curbing of the proud spirit. The choice must be made between God and the proud will, a will which is inspired by the devil. When one subjects himself unto God, he arrays himself under God, that is, he becomes obedient to him and subordinates his will to that of God. God himself arrays himself *against* the proud, while the humble arrays himself *under* God. This, will make certain the strength necessary to resist the devil. (1 Pet. 5: 6-10.)

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. If one desires to submit himself to God, here is the way to do it. God never refuses anyone who is willing to come to him. "All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6: 37.) To *cleanse* the hands, and *purify* the heart is to take into consideration both the seat of the motives and the actual commission of the deeds. The heart is the seat of our motives and intentions, while the hands are the instruments by which we execute our purposes. A doubleminded person is one who hesitates, one who vacillates in his purposes.

Be afflicted, and mourn and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. The word for "be afflicted" occurs only here in the New Testament. The meaning is, be wretched, and, in giv-

ing expression to this feeling, lament. This is a fax cry from the usual way in which people regard their sins against God. (Psalm 89: 31, 32.) This passage is interpreted to mean that the pain suffered under chastisement is one of the means of reconciliation with God. (Heb. 12: 5-13.)

The mourning and weeping are outward manifestations of their inward affliction; just as laughter and joy are outward manifestation of their inward feelings of gaiety which characterizes the proud. Their joy and laughter therefore must be turned into mourning and heaviness, if they are to be reconciled with God. The word "heaviness" means gloominess or dejection: Let your joy be turned into gloominess.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you. Jesus says, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matt. 23: 12.) Sins are always committed against God, and he must be taken into account before there is any forgiveness. When David besought the Lord's forgiveness for his sin with Bath-sheba, he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight." (Psalm 51: 4a.) The prodigal son made a similar plea when he returned to his father: "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son." (Luke 15: 21.)

When sinners humble themselves before God and comply with the conditions of pardon which he has graciously given, the Father not only forgives their sins, but restores them to their rightful place again, and enables them to rejoice as if they had never sinned. Read the 51st Psalm and Luke 15: 11-24.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What can you say about the amount of space occupied in the Bible of -warning against sin?

Why is this true?

How should we all feel about these warnings?

What responsibility do we have in regard to the warnings of the Bible?

Why is this true?

The Golden Text

What does the Biblical prohibition against covetousness imply?

Why is covetousness called idolatry?

Why is it so easy for one to be covetous?

What is the only remedy for this sin?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Source of Conflict among Christians

How is this lesson related to the lesson of last week?

Why do many Bible students find it difficult to think that James addressed the words of this lesson to Christians?

What is your idea about this question?
 Give reasons for your answer.
 What was James' purpose in writing this section of his epistle?
 What were their "pleasures"?
 How do these pleasures "war" in our members?
 How had the people to whom James wrote endeavored to obtain their desires?
 What was the real reason for their not having them?
 In what sense were they fighting and killing? and is such possible today?
 Give reasons for your answer.
 What is the meaning of the word "covet" in this text?
 What does the remark about prayer show regarding the people to whom James wrote? Why is this true?
 What does it mean for one to ask "amiss"?
 What is meant by spending it in their pleasures?

God Demands Undivided Allegiance
 Why did James call those people "adulteresses"?

Why is friendship with the world enmity with God?
 What is essential worldliness?
 Why did James introduce a scriptural quotation in verse 5?
 What was his point regarding the spirit which he made to dwell in us?
 Instead of following a sinful course, what does God do for his people?

The Lord's Way to Victory
 What is meant by saying that God resisteth the proud?
 How do we resist the devil?
 How may one subject himself to God?
 How may one draw near to God?
 What is implied by cleansing the hands and purifying the heart?
 What is a doubleminded person?
 What outward manifestations are required when one turns to God?
 How can one humble himself before God?
 Against whom are all sins committed?
 Why is this true?
 What does God do for those who humble themselves before him?

Lesson VIII—November 23, 1958

BREVITY OF LIFE

Lesson Text

James 4: 11-17

11 Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 One *only* is the lawgiver and judge, *even* he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?

13 Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and

trade and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that.

16 But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil.

17 To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Golden Text.—"*For all our days are passed away in thy wrath.*" (Psalm 90: 9a.)

Devotional Reading.—Rom. 5: 1-4,

Daily Bible Readings

November 17.	M..... A Watch in the Night (Psalm 90: 1-4)
November 18.	T..... The Days of Our Years (Psalm 90: 5-11)
November 19.	W..... A Heart of Wisdom (Psalm 90: 5, 12-17)
November 20.	T..... Days Consumed Like Smoke (Psalm 102: 1-8)
November 21.	F..... Days Like a Shadow (Psalm 102: 11-16)
November 22.	S..... The Christian Race (Heb. 12: 1-4)
November 23.	S..... Man's Days as Grass (Psalm 103: 14-22)

Time.—Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

PLACE.—The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

Persons.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

The idea expressed in the subject of the lesson today is one of the sobering thoughts of the Bible, and

of human experience. There is not a person in the world who can prolong life a single hour beyond God's

will for him. We are all in the hands of a just and merciful God; and when we thoughtfully consider this fact it will make a profound difference in the way we live. This is a subject, however, about which many people refuse to think.

Benjamin Franklin, the philosopher and statesman, once said that time is the stuff out of which life is made; and while there is an element of truth in that statement, it is also true, as the English poet, George Crabbe, wrote, "Life is not measured by the time we live." In writing about those who have no goal nor responsibility in life, Paul said, "But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth." (1 Tim. 5: 6.) Jesus says that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12: 15b), and it is equally

true that a man's life does not consist in mere existence.

The Bible teaches that God has a purpose for every person. "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, *even to them that are called according to his purpose.*" (Rom. 8: 28.) Both nature and revelation testify to the truthfulness of this statement. (Matt. 6: 26-30; 25: 14, 15.) While God has plans for every life, it is nevertheless true that he does not compel people to enter into those plans. The independent wills of children often lead them to make choices which are independent of the will of their parents, and the same thing is true of people generally. But when people are willing to follow God's plan for them, they should realize that the time is short at best for the accomplishing of those things which are possible for them to do.

The Golden Text

"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath." The Ninetieth Psalm is actually a prayer, and its author, as most Bible students agree, was Moses. This passage of scripture should be read frequently by every person, for it contains a philosophy which will draw people nearer to God and to a greater sense of their responsibility. The part of the psalm which serves as the golden text for this lesson probably refers to the wilderness experience of Moses and the Israelites as they journeyed toward Canaan, particularly when so many died as a result of their rebellion against God. It was literally true that they did pass away in his wrath.

So far as is known today, God does not punish people with physical death for their disobedience to his will, as he did in the days of Moses, and as he did even in New Testament times (Acts 5: 1-11), but that he punishes them is a fact which no one can dispute. The punishment which all shall receive for disobedience is eternal, and it is indescribable. It is pictured as a lake of fire, a bottomless

pit, outer darkness, eternal destruction, and in many other ways, each of which simply gives some idea of the nature of the punishment.

A good commentary of what it means to fall under the wrath of God is found in Heb. 10: 26-31: "For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*"

The Text Explained

Harsh Judgments of
One Another Condemned
(James 4: 11, 12)

Speak not one against another,

brethren. This statement should be read and interpreted in the light of Matt. 7: 1: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." The first thing that

should be noted here is that neither James nor Jesus condemns all kinds of judging. Jesus says, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7: 24.) A "critical faculty" has been divinely planted within us, and the Lord expects us to use it as he intended. There is not a day that passes in which we are not called upon to form judgments on people and things, and on our own conduct; but we are not to stop simply with judging. It is our duty to prove all things; and then hold fast to that which is good. (1 Thess. 5: 21; 1 John 4: 1.)

The kind of judging which is condemned by both Jesus and James is the practice of ill-natured criticism, hasty and half-formed opinions, the open and even unconscious assertion of our own superiority, the malicious whispers, and the cruel sneers which do so much harm in everyday relationships of human life. In a word, we are to refrain from self-righteous, loveless, and censorious judgment. (Luke 6: 27-38.) Someone has said that one of the greatest questions of life is the pain which we have caused; and it is certain that there is coming an awful day of reckoning for the man with an uncharitable tongue. Such a person is, without a doubt, among the greatest of the mischief-makers of the earth.

He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. The law referred to here is probably the law of Christ (James 1: 25) which condemns all such censorious judging. Therefore, to speak against a brother is to speak against the law; for that, in effect, condemns the law which forbids such speaking. Christians are to be governed by the law of love (1 Cor. 13), and to act contrary to that law is to question its moral and spiritual standards, and to set one's own opinions up against God's will. When a person does that he is not obeying the law, but is himself setting the standard by which he will speak and act.

One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor? These words are apparently intended to show the arro-

gant impertinence of those who speak against one another, and thereby speak against the law. God's people are supposed to be doers of the law, rather than lawgivers. God alone is the lawgiver, and he has both the power to save and the power to destroy; and he alone is the judge of such matters. When James asks, *Who are you that judge your neighbor?* he is calling attention to their lack of both the right and ability to do such a thing. If we were allowed to judge, our judgment would be inadequate; for we do not have sufficient insight to know the facts in the case. So then, after all, what does our judgment of our neighbor amount to? (1 Cor. 4: 1-5.)

The Futility of Arrogant Self-Confidence (James 4: 13-15)

Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: The beginning of this paragraph introduces another fault which James seeks to correct, namely, that of presumptuous confidence respecting the future, or of making plans for the future without taking into consideration the uncertainty of life and our absolute dependence upon God. The words "come now" are the translation of a single original term and are used as an expression of disapproval. This form, used as an interjection, is found in the New Testament only here and in James 5: 1. Its purpose is to arrest the attention.

An interesting aspect of this section is the picture of the commercial life of the Jews of the Dispersion. It appears that they were no longer engaged in the pastoral pursuits which characterized them in their homeland, but, being congregated in the cities of the nations, they were chiefly engaged in commerce. Many of the Jews were wealthy and became successful shipowners and merchants, as one would gather from the literature covering that period.

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. These words sound a note of solemn warning. Edersheim quotes a saying of the rabbis, as follows, "Care not for the morrow, for ye know not what a day may bring forth. Perhaps he may

not be [alive] on the morrow, and so have cared for a world that does not exist for him." (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. I, page 539.) James' statement about the morrow reminds us of that which Jesus said, as he gave the true philosophy regarding the question in hand: "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 33, 34.)

What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. The Bible contains many answers to the question which James here asks. For example, Your life is as a tale that is told; it is called a pilgrimage, a swift post, a swift ship, a handbreadth, a shepherd's tent which has been removed, a thread cut by the weaver, a dream, nothing, a sleep, a shadow, a flower, a weaver's shuttle, water which has been spilled on the ground, grass, and wind.

One of the first things which strikes us as we consider these images, along with the vapor which James mentions here, is the brevity and evanescence which they suggest. Life, indeed, is short, and that seems to have been the thought which the inspired penman was seeking to emphasize in the lesson now before us. These people were making their plans for the future without taking God into consideration, and James wanted them to understand that there is no guarantee about the future of one's existence here upon the earth. All plans must depend upon the continuance of life, but what a frail and uncertain basis that is!

For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. Thus, instead of saying what they were going to do, they should be saying, If the Lord will, we shall live the year out, and do this or that. It may not be necessary for one to repeat these words every time he makes a statement regarding the future, but it is certain that he should always act upon that basis. We should never make any plans without taking God into consideration.

The reason for this attitude is obvious when we consider the fact that we are entirely helpless without God. He alone can prolong our lives and make our plans prosper; and it is entirely within his power to thwart the very best plans which can be made. We do not have control over anything which is absolutely necessary to the success of our plans. Someone has said, "Do his will as if it were thy will, that he may do thy will as if it were his will. Annul thy will before his will, that he may annul the will of others before thy will." We must always remember that both life and action depend upon the will of God.

It is interesting to go through the writings of Paul and observe the number of times he subjects his will to the will of God. He literally put into practice the exhortation which James gives here. (Acts 18: 21; 1 Cor. 4: 19; 16: 7; Heb. 6: 3; Rom. 1: 10; 15: 32; 1 Pet. 3: 17.) No one can sincerely take the will of God into consideration without being humble in his sight, and no thoughtful person will object to doing so when he remembers that Jesus says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21.)

The Sinfulness of Self-Sufficiency (James 4: 16, 17)

But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil. To glory in their vauntings was to boast or pride themselves in their arrogance. They were not simply making plans for the future, subject to the will of God, but were actually taking things into their own hands. Such an attitude as that is always wrong; all such glorying is evil. God expects his people to use the ability which he has given to them; but he expects them to realize that they are always dependent upon the will of their Creator.

To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. While the statement made in this verse is the expression of a general principle, it appears that James is using it to illustrate the particular sin which he has just brought to their attention. The arrogant boasting

which they were doing was evil (1) because it forgets God, and (2) because it unduly exalts self. They had formed their plans for the future as if their own wisdom and ability were sufficient. This attitude toward life it evil.

It is difficult to conceive that these people did not know any better than to act as they had been doing, but it is possible that James is saying to them something like this: You have erred in your thoughtlessness, but now that things have been made plain to you regarding your attitude toward God, it will be sin on your part if you do not do as you have been taught. At any rate, it is always sin for one to fail to do that which he knows to be the will of God.

The principle here stated is true regarding any situation. Knowledge without practice always involves the possessor in sin. Someone has said that nothing injures the soul more than wasted impressions. Feelings exhaust themselves and evaporate, if they are not embodied in practice. No one is going to act until he feels that he should, but if one does not act out his feelings, he will soon cease to feel.

There are few things more impressive in the moral teaching of Jesus than the stress which is laid upon positive and active goodness. Men had long held a negative Golden Rule, but he transposed it from a negative to an affirmative concept, and likewise summed up the negatives of the Jewish Decalogue in two positive commandments. See Matt. 22: 34-40. In the Sermon on the

Mount he charges all who do not do the will of God as being workers of iniquity, and he shows the wisdom or the foolishness of people, depending upon their doing or not doing that which they had heard.

The priest and the Levite are pictured as poor, pitiful figures beside the good Samaritan, although they had not been guilty of any positive wrong-doing. They had not molested the traveller on the Jericho road, but in the eyes of Jesus their failure to act had made them sinners. If the Samaritan had died as a result of the treatment which he received at the hands of the robbers, the law could not have touched the priest and the Levite for their inattention; but in the eyes of Divine justice, they would have been grave offenders. Their omission of duty was as bad as the crime of the robbers; their indifference as sinful as the violation of the commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." Their passing by on the other side became an example for all time of the baseness of doing nothing, of the wickedness of a negative failure.

In the parable of the talents, it was the man who did nothing that was condemned. In fact, in every parable of judgment the people who were condemned were not the people who had committed deeds of positive evil, but those who had failed to act. The five foolish virgins simply failed to take extra oil in their vessels with their lamps. The people pictured at the judgment who were condemned were those who had failed to take positive action when they came in contact with those who were in need.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What impression does the realization of the subject for today usually make?

Why is this true?

Why do many people refuse to think about it?

What is the true relation between time and life?

Is it true that God has a purpose for every life? Give reasons for your answer.

When people are willing to follow God's purpose for them, what should they realize?

The Golden Text

Where is this golden text found and who wrote it?

How were "all our days passed away in thy wrath"?

In what way can this principle be applied today?

Give a summary of the teaching of the Bible regarding the punishment of the wicked.

Show that Heb. 10: 26-31 is a good commentary on the golden text.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Harsh Judgments

of One Another Condemned

What did James mean by "speak not one against another"?

Is it ever right to judge people? Give reasons for your answer.

What should righteous judging lead to?

What kind of judging does James condemn?

When one speaks against a brother, what else does he do? Why is this true?
Why say that there is only one lawgiver and judge?

The Futility of Arrogant Self-Confidence

What sin does James condemn in this section of our lesson?

How does he call attention to this sin?

What aspect of the life of the Jews in the Dispersion is portrayed here?

What should always be our attitude toward the morrow? Why?

What is the force of the question, "What is your life?"

How does the Bible answer this question?

What is the true attitude toward the future?

What is involved in saying "if the Lord will"?

How did Paul exemplify this teaching in his life?

Why should people always be willing to say, If the Lord will?

The Sinfulness of Self-Sufficiency

What does it mean to glory in one's vauntings?

Does God expect his people to make plans for the future? Give reasons for your answer.

How much ground does the statement in verse 17 cover? and what was James' purpose in introducing it here?

What does knowledge without practice always do to its possessor?

Why do wasted impressions injure the soul?

What is the chief difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of the old order?

How did Christ illustrate the principle herein involved?

Lesson IX—November 30, 1958

PATIENCE UNDER AFFLICTION

Lesson Text

James 5: 1-11

1 Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days.

4 Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sa-ba'-oth.

5 Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one: he doth not resist you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

9 Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors.

10 Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord.

11 Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer" (Rom. 12: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 37: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

November 24. M.....	The God of Patience (Rom. 15: 1-5)
November 25. T.....	Fruit-Bearing with Patience (Luke 8: 1-15)
November 26. W.....	Patience in Affliction (2 Cor. 6: 1-6)
November 27. T.....	Shall Reap in Due Season (Gal. 6: 1-9)
November 28. F.....	Patience of Hope (1 Thess. 1: 1-3)
November 29.....	S. The Patient Shall Inherit the Promises (Heb. 6: 12-15)
November 30. S.....	Patience of the Saints (Rev. 14: 12, 13)

TIME.—Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

Place.—The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

Persons.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

Attention has already been called to the fact that the Epistle of James is one of the most practical books in the New Testament. It contains wide range of subjects which have, for the most part, the average life of a Christian in mind. Many Bible students regard the entire epistle as being very disconnected, but that does not detract from the value of the message itself. In fact, it is not always necessary for a literary production to be coherent in a grammatical sense, in order for it to be an effective means of teaching.

The first paragraph of our lesson for today was evidently addressed to unbelieving Jews who were both covetous and oppressive. This and other parts of the epistle have led some Bible students to think that James was writing to Jews in general when he penned this epistle. But that conclusion is not a necessary one; for the whole tenor of the book

contemplates Christians. Furthermore, it was necessary for James to condemn the evil practices of the unbelieving Jews, in order to encourage the believers to bear with patience the violence of the rich and oppressive.

After having pointed out the coming judgment for the wicked and unsympathetic, James devotes the second paragraph to the encouragement of the children of God who were suffering at the hands of the godless. He introduces a number of illustrations to reinforce his exhortations, and they are all of such a nature as to make the lesson most effective. No one can live the Christian life without suffering afflictions. This is affirmed over and over by Jesus and the inspired writers of the New Testament; but God will never allow them to overcome the Christian who is willing to bear them with steadfastness. (1 Cor. 10: 13; 1 Thess. 3: 3.)

The Golden Text

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer." Hope is one of the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament. It is so great that Paul says that we are saved by it. "For in hope were we saved." (Rom. 8: 24a.) This hope always lies before us, and is described as "an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. 6: 18-20.) Hope makes us stedfast in all our afflictions, and enables us to rejoice as we look forward to the future.

The word "patient" means to be stedfast. It is the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings (Thayer). Hope, tribulations, and stedfastness are all linked together in Rom. 5: 3-5, as may be seen by quoting that passage: "And not only so, but we also rejoice

in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness; and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." (James 1: 2-4.)

It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of prayer in the life of a Christian. Paul did not merely exhort the Roman brethren to pray, when he urged them to continue stedfastly in prayer. He took it for granted that they prayed, but he wanted to make sure that they did not relax or lose their first zeal for prayer. (1 Thess. 5: 17; Eph. 6: 18; 1 Tim. 2: 8; Acts 2: 42.) But if one is to continue stedfastly in prayer, he must have a prayerful spirit, or, which is the same thing, his whole desire must be to please God. (2 Cor. 5: 9; 1 Cor. 10: 31.) The desire for continuous fellowship with the Lord will cause the Christian to want to pray, and to make the daily effort to please the God to whom he prays. (1 John 1: 6, 7.)

The Text Explained

The Worldly Rich Denounced

(James 5: 1-6)

Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. The expression "come now," as was pointed out in the preceding lesson, is used to arrest the attention. It is extremely unfortunate that such conditions as are portrayed in the first paragraph of our lesson for today exist between so-called capital and labor, but that they did exist in James' day and that they still continue today is undeniable. The Lord's will regarding the relationship between masters and servants is clearly set forth in the New Testament, as may be seen by reading the following and similar passages:

"Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same thing unto them, and forbear threatening; knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him." (Eph. 6: 5-9; Col. 3: 22; 4: 1.)

It is very probable that this address to the unbelieving rich was riot so much for their benefit, as it was for the Lord's people. They needed encouragement to bear with patience the violence of the rich, and this was one way to give it to them. The words "weep and howl" are literally "weep, howling," or "wail and cry aloud over your tribulations." It appears that "howl" is a descriptive word, and denotes a more demonstrative and passionate expression of grief than weeping. The miseries which they would suffer probably refer to those of the judgment.

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. These people had failed to understand and to put into practice the true meaning of riches. Such blessings were never

intended as selfish possessions, but were to be regarded as a trust for the glory of God and the benefit of the needy. "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed." (1 Tim. 6: 17-19; Matt. 6: 24-34; 25: 31-46.) The original word for "corrupted" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and it literally means to rot or decay. Their riches and garments were not being used and as a result became useless. The word for "motheaten" is found only here in the New Testament. (Acts 12: 23; Matt. 6: 19, 20.)

Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Gold and silver do not rust in the same way that other metals do, and it appears that the idea is that they become tarnished or corroded. At any rate the condition described in the verse now before us came about as a result of their idleness. They were not used for the benefit of anyone. This "rust" shall be a silent witness against the owners of the gold and silver. It once "ate" their riches, but it shall gnaw the conscience of the former possessors of the riches as they suffer endless punishment for their sin. As metal is slowly consumed by rust, the human being is pictured as being consumed by fire which shall prey upon their bodies for ever. This is a terrible fate to contemplate, people may think that they are laying up their treasures for themselves, but they are actually laying them up for the last days. They can use them now, but when the end comes they will but testify against them.

Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the

Lord of Sabaoth. Not only had the people concerning whom James wrote these things failed to use their wealth for the benefit of the needy; they had also deprived the laborers who had worked for them, thus making it possible for the rich to have their money. They not only had the money which was rightfully theirs; they also had that which belonged to the laborers. (Lev. 19: 13.) But the laborers were not without a friend; for their cries entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, that is, the Lord of hosts. This shows that the Lord is amply able to protect and defend the helpless; and he has promised to take vengeance on all who mistreat the poor. James is the only New Testament writer who uses the expression "Lord of Sabaoth," and he employs it only once. Rom. 9:29 is a quotation from Isa. 1: 9. God's hosts or armies cannot be defeated.

Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasures; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. These people were living a life of luxury and extravagance at the expense of the laborers who were making it possible for them to have what they wanted. They had fattened themselves by revelry as animals do when they eat to their hearts' content on the very day of their slaughter, unconscious that it was their day of destruction. The day of slaughter for the wicked rich is the day of judgment.

Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you. The reference here is not clear. Some think that Christ was meant, others, righteous men in general, and still others, the righteous people who labored for them and whom they defrauded. The probable meaning is that the kind of conduct which is here described was characteristic of them. They had been accustomed to condemning and killing the righteous, who did not resist them. The latter were content to leave the matter of vengeance to God and the armies of heaven. (Rom. 12: 19-21; Rev. 6: 9-11.)

Patience Enjoined (James 5: 7-9)

Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The foes of the righteous who have been mis-

treated are also the foes of the Lord. "If so be that it is a righteous thing With God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might." (2 Thess. 1: 6-9; Matt. 25: 41-45.) The word "patience" is used here in the sense of restraint or longsuffering. They must wait for the Lord. This idea is implied in the previous statement "he doth not resist you," that is, he is willing to suffer long, or wait for the Lord. "Brethren" is used in contrast with the wicked rich.

Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. What would a farmer gain by being impatient regarding his crop? Instead, he calmly waits for the precious fruit (Psalm 126: 5, 6) and he knows that he cannot hasten it by his impatience. The early rain (for sowing) usually fell in October-December, while the latter rain (for maturing) generally fell in March and April. The "precious" fruit more than compensates for all the trials during the waiting period.

Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand. While the New Testament makes it clear that no one on earth knows when the Lord is coming (Matt. 24: 36), the Lord's people, nevertheless, are exhorted to live as if the day of the Lord is at hand. (2 Pet. 3: 10-12.) Nothing can strengthen the heart more, amid the trials of earth, than the realization that the Lord is coming to take care of all our needs. This is one of the great purposes of the promises which are to be found in the Bible. We must be unmoved by the trials which come upon us (1 Thess. 3: 3). The Lord is not unrighteous to forget that which his people suffer for his sake. (Heb. 6: 10.)

Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the

doors. The term "murmur" literally means to sigh or groan, and it is used here in the sense of "grumble." It is a frequent occurrence for professed followers of Christ to find fault or complain against those who do not do to suit them. The objects of their grumbling may be members of the church, or, as we have just observed, they may be those who actually wrong them. It is not our lot to judge, that is, condemn; that is the prerogative of the Lord; and, behold, he standeth before the doors, that is, he is ready to exercise his right. It is much better to wait than to judge; for Jesus says, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." (Luke 6: 37.)

Old Testament Examples of Patience (James 5: 10, 11)

Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. James has just mentioned the trials and tribulations which the Lord's people to whom he wrote were suffering, and he exhorted them not to grumble or complain against another. And now he cites an example of suffering and of patience for their encouragement. The word "suffering" carries with it the idea of affliction. They were afflicted and they were stedfast in their endurance. The prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord were the Old Testament prophets, and that they as a class were persecuted may be learned from the Old Testament itself, and from the testimony of Jesus and other New Testament men. (Matt. 5: 10-12; 23: 34, 35; Heb. 11: 32-33.) This has always been true of those who spoke against the ways of worldly people. "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil." (John 7: 7.) Faithful prophets followed this same course, and they received the same treatment as the Lord himself did.

Behold, we call them blessed that endured; ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful. The "them" refers to the Old Testament prophets who endured the affliction to which they were subjected; and they were "happy" in the same sense in which Jesus was when he suffered. (Heb. 12: 1, 2.) The well known case of Job is next cited: and this, incidentally, shows that Job was a real person, and not merely a legendary character.

The "end of the Lord" was the happy conclusion to which the Lord brought Job after his terrible affliction. Job bore his suffering with true patience, and that fact should be emphasized here; and then comes the reward. "And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: and Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before. . . . So Jehovah blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." (Job 42: 10, 12a.)

The answer which Jehovah gave to Job regarding the question of human suffering, and the seeming injustice of it, is the answer that we need today. (1 Cor. 10: 13; James 1: 2-8.) Jehovah is to be trusted and obeyed, rather than argued with or about. (Job 13: 15; 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.) Anyone who is acquainted with the Bible knows that the Lord teaches that life is a probation, a trial; but the purpose of the trial is always good. There is, after all, nothing extraordinary or unique about the sufferings of Job or the prophets. People have always suffered since sin entered the world; but the outcome of the suffering depends upon the character of the person who does the suffering. "But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23: 10.) "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 28.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Quote the golden text.

Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What is the practical value of the Book of James?

What class of people did James have in

mind in the first paragraph of our lesson for today?

What was his probable purpose in discussing their situation?

Is it possible for one to live as the Lord directs without suffering? Give reasons for your answer.

The Golden Text

What is "hope" and what place does it have in the Christian life?
 What does it mean to be patient?
 How may one continue stedfastly in prayer?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Worldly Rich Denounced

What is the significance of the expression "Come now"?
 Why do the rich sometimes take advantage of the poor?
 How does the Lord want masters and servants to treat each other?
 What did James tell the rich to do? and why?

What is implied by the term "howl"?
 What had happened to their riches and garments?
 How does God expect people to use their riches?
 What had caused their gold and silver to "rust"?

How would that affect them?
 How would it eat their flesh as fire?
 In what way had they laid up their treasure in the last days?
 How had they deprived the laborers of their hire?
 Who was touched by their cries?
 What is the meaning of "the Lord of Sabaoth"?
 In what way had these worldly rich people lived? and with what result?

What had they done to righteous people? and how had the righteous reacted?

Patience Enjoined

Why be patient until the coming of the Lord?
 In what sense is the term "patience" used here?
 How does James illustrate this exhortation?
 What is meant by the early and latter rain?
 How were the brethren to establish their hearts?
 In what sense is the coming of the Lord at hand?
 What is the meaning of "murmur"? and why the exhortation not to do it?
 What is the significance of the expression "the judge standeth before the doors"?

Old Testament Examples of Patience

How does James illustrate the need for and the quality of patience?
 Who were the prophets and how did they speak in the name of the Lord?
 Why does the world always oppose those who speak in the name of the Lord?
 In what way are persecuted people blessed?
 Why is Job introduced here?
 What did the Lord do for him following his suffering?
 Who primarily determines the outcome of one's suffering?

Lesson X—December 7, 1958

PRAYER

Lesson Text

James 5: 13-20

13 Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise.

14 Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth

much in its working.

17 E-li'-jah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him;

20 Let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

Golden Text.—"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 11: 1-13.

Daily Bible Readings

December 1. M.....	Men Ought Always to Pray (Luke 18: 1-7)
December 2. T.....	A Prayer of Moses (Ex. 33: 11-13)
December 3. W.....	Hezekiah's Prayer (2 Kings 9: 15-19)
December 4. T.....	Jesus Answers Prayer (Matt. 15: 22-28)
December 5. F.....	Prayer of Wicked Not Answered (John 9: 1-31)
December 6. S.....	Elijah's Prayer (1 Kings 18: 24-44)
December 7. S.....	Spirit Aids Our Infirmities (Rom. 8: 26)

TIME.—Uncertain, but probably about A.D. 60.

PLACE.—The epistle was probably written in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion.

Introduction

No one can read the Book of James without being impressed with the emphasis which he places on prayer. He begins by urging Christians to pray for wisdom when they are confronted with trials too great for them to overcome; but he cautions that prayer must be in faith. The "hesitator," that is, the doubter, need not expect anything from the Lord; for he is "a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways." And then as James is ready to close the epistle, he again stresses the importance of prayer, as is seen in our lesson for today.

There are always urgent reasons for studying the meaning of prayer; for prayer is either the primary fact in our life here upon the earth, or it is the worst delusion. Prayer is not merely a form to be engaged in from time to time; it is something which meets the deepest needs of the soul. It has been described as every man's supreme effort to find the right answer to the meaning of life. Prayer has also been described as communion with an Ideal Companion; and with this view of the question, it is easy to see that prayer is not primarily a matter of our talking, God's listening, and then answering, as is so commonly assumed.

As already suggested, prayer is an essential part of the Christian life and worship. The true elements of worship, in fact, must be combined in prayer. These elements are (1) supreme love for God, (2) supreme reverence for God, and (3) supreme obedience to God. Supreme love will cause the worshipper to want to do the will of God above everything else; supreme reverence will cause him to fear above everything else to disobey him; and supreme obedience will result in his actually doing that which God has commanded.

A well-rounded prayer will contain *praise to God*. This is the worshipper's response to his recognition of the character and dignity of God. How could the well informed and thoughtful Christian fail to adore his heavenly Father? Prayer also contains *thanksgiving to God*, that is, the giving of thanks for the blessings of life, and for the privilege of prayer itself. *Confession to God* is the confession of our sins to him. We must remember that sin cannot remain in his presence. *Petition to God* is the request which the worshipper makes to him for his blessings. This is enough to show, let it again be emphasized, that prayer is not altogether asking for something.

The Golden Text

"*Pray without ceasing.*" The essence of prayer is holding communion with God. This requires, of course, that we be in fellowship with him. No one can commune with God if his heart is away from him. This is what James means when he says "But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways." To pray in faith, without doubting, is to have one mind and heart fixed upon God, with the sincere expectation of being heard.

To pray without ceasing is to continue steadfastly in prayer. We must

never relax or lose our interest in and zeal for prayer. The spirit of prayer must permeate our whole being; we must always have the consciousness of being in God's presence. When this is done, prayer becomes more of an atmosphere than an act, more of an attitude than simply a deed, and more of a spirit than merely doing something. It is holding oneself in tune with God, and delighting to do so. It is then that the Spirit can take our groanings which we ourselves cannot utter, and interpret them so as to make them into intercessions for us. (Rom. 8: 26, 27.)

When one reaches this point in his spiritual development he has really learned how to pray, and he enjoys an unbroken fellowship with God.

It is living all the time in this attitude of spiritual consonance with God that constitutes the highest degree of spiritual excellence of which human beings are capable. It is then much easier for them to live as

they should, for they are continually seeking to please God and thereby continue in his fellowship. It is only in this way that Christians can pray without ceasing; they are having intercourse with an Ideal Companion.

The Text Explained

The Call to Prayer (James 5: 13-16)

Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise. It appears that James, in this verse, is exhorting each one to give expression to his feelings in an appropriate manner. If one is in mental or physical anguish, the natural thing for him to do is to pray. If he is in a cheerful mood, he should give expression to that attitude through singing. If there is any connection between verses 12 and 13, it would seem to be in this respect: Instead of swearing or engaging in some other improper use of the tongue, let those who suffer, pray; and those who are cheerful, sing. Suffering and cheerfulness describe the usual conditions of the average human being.

Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. The "suffering" in verse 13 appears to be general, while "sick" in this place is more specific, that is, some kind of bodily affliction. In the case of the latter, the sufferer is exhorted to call for the elders of the church, that is, the shepherds of the flock of which he is a member. This gives some idea of the close relationship and sympathetic attitude which should exist between the overseers and the overseen.

When the elders are called to visit an afflicted member of the church, as set forth by James, they are to do two things, namely, (1) pray over him, and (2) anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. The idea is that works should accompany their prayers. If the reference is to miraculous healing, then that was confined to the age of miracles, an age which closed with the completion of the New Testament, near the end of the first century of the Christian dispensation. But if the reference is to the use of oil as a medicine, then

the practice should still be continued, that is, the elders should pray for the sick and along with their prayers they should use the best means available to bring about the cure. After men have done the best they can, and even while they are doing it, they should beseech God to bless their efforts and do that which they are able to do.

Oil as a curative agent was widely used in Bible times. When Christ sent out the twelve under the limited commission, it is said that they "anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." (Mark 6: 13.) The healing here was evidently miraculous, but even then they made use of the general practice of the time. When the good Samaritan came upon the injured man on the Jericho road, he "bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine" (Luke 10: 34); that is, he made use of the curative agencies of his time. Thus, whether in connection with miraculous healing or the ordinary treatment of the suffering, oil was freely used. And so in the case before us, whether the reference is to miraculous healing or to the ordinary cures of the day, prayer should be accompanied with the best efforts on the part of those who administer to the needs of the sick.

And the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. The "prayer of faith" evidently refers to the prayer of the elders of the sick, although it does not preclude faith on the part of the sufferer; for" after all faith must have prompted him to call the elders. Salvation from sickness probably refers to the physical healing, which is implied in the Lord's raising him up. Physical illness and sin were closely related in the minds of Bible people, as may be seen by reading Matt. 9: 1-8. It is possible that that is the

view which James presents here; and if the reference is to miraculous healing, then the situation would be similar to that described in the passage in Matthew just cited. But if the reference is to a situation which does not involve the miraculous, then the forgiveness of sins would follow the action of faith as set forth in the law of forgiveness. (Acts 8: 22; 1 John 1: 8, 9.) It is always right to pray for the sick, that is, if the prayer is one of faith; but such prayer should always be supplemented by the best known means of cure.

The prayer of faith for the sick must always be in keeping with the limitations of all true prayer; we must always pray in humble submission to the will of God. Any thoughtful person must know that it was never God's intention that every case of bodily sickness be healed. If that were his intention, then death from illness would be speedily banished from any Christian community: for it would always be possible to find some godly people who would offer a prayer of faith in behalf of the sick. The statement of James regarding the matter of praying for the sick and their being healed must be understood in the light of the general teaching of the New Testament on prayer, forgiveness, and the restoration of physical health. (1 Tim. 5: 23; 2 Tim. 4: 20.) These passages show that Paul himself, who possessed the power to heal, did not always exercise it.

Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. It should be kept in mind that many passages of scripture seem to imply that there is a definite connection between illness and sin. (Isa. 33: 24; John 5: 14.) If the reference in the passage now before us is to that idea, then there was a direct connection between forgiveness of sin and the restoration to health. There is still a large element of truth in the application of the idea to people today; for it is a recognized fact that people do suffer physical illness as a result of their sins. There is, of course, no miracle involved in cures today, that is, no miracle in which man himself plays a part.

The confession of sin is essential

to forgiveness at anytime; and the confession should always be as broad as the sin. There are some sins which the sinner does not need to confess to his fellow men, for they are not known and they do not affect others; but when sin has been committed which has a bearing on the lives of other people, that sin should be confessed. Sin will not be forgiven until it is confessed, that is, until we admit that we have sinned; and that is the plain teaching of the New Testament: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 9.) The term "confess" means to say the same thing. (1 John 1: 10.)

The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. A comparison of this rendering with other translations of this passage may lead to a better understanding of it. Moffatt: "The prayers of the righteous have a powerful effect." Phillips: "Tremendous power is made available through a good man's earnest prayer." Harris: "The prayer of a righteous man is of great force
I when I energized."

A natural question is, What is it which energizes or makes effective the prayers of the righteous? We know from the general teaching of the New Testament on the subject of prayer that there are two principal factors. (1) The divine side. "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8: 26, 27.) (2) The human side. The prayer of a righteous man is of great influence *when he throws his whole energy into it.* God always adds his blessings to the best efforts of his children.

Effective Praying Illustrated by Elijah (James 5: 17, 18)

Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not

on the earth for three years and sir months. The full history of this episode regarding Elijah is found in 1 Kings 17 and 18. Ahab was the king of Israel and Jezebel was his wife. Their wickedness had practically alienated the entire nation from God. And then one day Elijah burst upon the scene and announced with all authority, "As Jehovah, the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." He then left as suddenly as he had appeared. A long drought like this would pave the way for a contest between Elijah and the false prophets of Baal. If it could be shown that rain would come only at the word of God's prophet, then the people could easily see who was their real benefactor.

It is easy for people to get the idea that a prophet such as Elijah would be so raised above us as to afford no example which would be applicable to common mortals like ourselves. James therefore explains that Elijah was a man of like nature with us. He was a righteous man and his example is a powerful illustration of the effectiveness of prayer by a man who was seeking to do God's will. His request was most unusual, but it was not contrary to God's will; and his petition was granted. Nothing is too great for God to do, if it is according to his will. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and will show thee great things, and difficult, which thou knowest not." (Jer. 33: 3.) God wants his people to have confidence in him, and he is willing to hear their prayers when they try to do his will. (Matt. 18: 19, 20: 21: 22: Phil. 4: 6, 7; Luke 18: 1-8.)

And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. In James 4: 3, the inspired writer says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures." This shows that our motive for praying must always be pure. What, then, was the motive which prompted Elijah in these unusual prayers? The answer is found in 1 Kings 18: 36, 37: "And it came to

pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

Saves the Lost

(James 5: 19, 20)

My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins. It is not certain that there is a direct connection between the two verses now under consideration and that which is just before them. It could be that James is citing a great field for effective praying, that is, in connection with the conversion of the lost; but it is more probable that he is simply giving a closing thought to his epistle.

There are some Bible students who are of the opinion that the entire Book of James is but the report of a sermon which he preached, which was later put into writing or, print, as we would call it, and sent to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion. If this is correct, then the closing verses are comparable to an invitation which usually follows a sermon. At any rate, the words now before us give some idea of what it means to turn people from sin to Christ.

It is easy, in this sinful world, for people to fall into error. There are so many voices calling them; but the fact that there are people who are lost, gives the faithful in Christ an opportunity to seek their restoration. "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6: 1, 2.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction
What place does prayer occupy in the Epistle of James?

Why is the study of the subject of prayer important?
 Give in your own words a definition of prayer.
 In what way is prayer related to worship?
 What are the elements of true worship?
 What does a well-rounded prayer contain?

The Golden Text

What is the essence of prayer and what is meant by that expression?
 What does it mean to pray without ceasing?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Call to Prayer

Why should the suffering pray, and the cheerful sing praise?
 Do you think that there is any connection between verses 12 and 13? Give reasons for your answer.
 Why do you think that suffering and cheerfulness are mentioned here?
 What are the sick exhorted to do?
 Why call for the elders of the church? and what are they to do?
 Does this practice have any application to us? Give reasons for your answer.
 Why anoint with oil along with the praying?
 How would the prayer of faith save the sick?
 How shall the Lord raise him up?
 Does this passage teach that there is a connection between sin and physical illness? Give reason for your answer.
 Should Christians pray for the sick today? and should they give medicine?
 Does the New Testament teach that every person will be healed for whom

prayers of faith are offered? Give reason for your answer.
 Why should the people of the Lord confess their sins to each other?
 Can you explain why this is not generally done today?
 What do we do when we "confess" our sins? (Note: God says that we sin, and when we confess if we say the same thing.)
 What is said of the supplication of a righteous man? and why is this true?

Effective Praying Illustrated by Elijah

Who was Elijah? and for what did he pray?
 Why explain that Elijah was a man of like passions with us?
 Why did he make such an unusual request?
 Is it wrong for Christians to ask for unusual things?
 What must always govern Christians in their praying?
 How many conditions of acceptable prayer can you name?
 What are the pertinent facts in the passage which give the motive of Elijah for his prayers?

Saving the Lost

In what ways may people err from the truth?
 What does it mean to convert a sinner from the error of his way?
 How can one person save another soul from death?
 How can we cover a multitude of sins?
 What duty always rests upon the spiritual in Christ Jesus?

Lesson XI—December 14, 1958

JUDE, SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

Lesson Text

Matt. 13: 55, 56; Jude 1-7

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Si-món, and Ju'-das?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

1 Jude, a servant of Je-sus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Je'-sus Christ:

2 Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in privily, *even* they who were of old

written of beforehand unto this condemnation. ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Je-sus Christ.

5 Now I desire to put you in remembrance. though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of E'-gypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sod'-om and Go-morrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

Golden Text.—*"And being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness."* (Rom. 6: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Pet. 1: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

December 8.	M.	. An Approved Servant (Luke 12: 35-48)
December 9.	T.	..... A Wise Servant (Luke 16: 1-13)
December 10.	W.	..... Servants of Righteousness (Rom. 6: 17, 18)
December 11.	T.	A Servant the Lord's Freeman (1 Cor. 7: 21-24)
December 12.	F.	Paul, a Servant of Christ (Phil. 1: 1-5)
December 13.	S.	Peter, a Servant of the Lord (2 Pet. 1: 1-5)
December 14.	S.	..... Servants of God (Acts 16: 16-25)

Time.—Probably between A.D. 65 and 70.

PLACE.—The place of writing is unknown.

PERSONS.—Jude and probably Hebrew Christians generally.

Introduction

The Epistle of Jude is one of the seven general epistles which are found in the New Testament. The letter now under consideration occupies the last place in that list. These epistles are sometimes called "catholic," that is, general, probably because they were not addressed to any particular church or individual. (James 1: 1; 1 Pet. 1: 1.) This meaning of the term, of course, does not strictly apply to Second and Third John, as may be seen by reading those epistles; but for convenience's sake, the seven epistles have been grouped together under the common title of *general* or *catholic*.

The name "Jude" is a contraction of Judas. Judas of the New Testament and Judah of the Old Testament mean the same. In the New Testament the names Judah, Judas, and Jude are all from the same original word. The name *Judas* was common among the Jews during the days of Christ and the early church. For example, Judas Iscariot (Matt. 10: 4); Judas the son of James (Luke 10: 16); Judas of Galilee (Acts 5: 37); Judas of Damascus (Acts 9: 11); Judas called Barsabbas (Acts 15: 22); and Judas the Lord's brother. (Matt. 13: 55.) We do not know how

long it was after Judas Iscariot committed his infamous act of betraying Christ before people ceased to give that name to their children; but we do know that no believer in Christ today would think of naming his child Judas. We wonder sometimes if Jude used the abbreviated form to dissociate himself from the traitor.

As has already been suggested, we do not have any direct information regarding the people for whom Jude intended his epistle; but from a comparison of this letter with James and Second Peter, especially the latter, we naturally infer that he probably wrote to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion. (1 Pet. 1: 1.) (We gather from 2 Pet. 3: 1 that both of the epistles of Peter were addressed to the same people.) Bible students are of the opinion that either Jude or Peter had the other's letter before him when he wrote. (Jude 3-18; ? Pet. 1: 5; 2: 1-8.) They are not sure as to which epistle was written first. It is, of course, possible that they are correct in their thinking that one had access to the other's epistle when he wrote, but that is by no means a necessary conclusion. They both wrote under divine supervision.

The Golden Text

"And being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." The use of the term "servant," literally, "bondservant," to express a relationship to God or Christ, occurs frequently in the New Testament. It means a slave of God or Christ, that is, one who is owned by them body and soul. "Know ye not, that

to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being

made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6: 16-18; 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.)

The process by which one becomes the servant of another is called "redemption," and the meaning is that he has been purchased by another. "Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men." (1 Cor. 7: 23.) "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.) When one has been freed from the bondage of sin, he is thereafter obligated to render complete and undivided service to his new master—righteousness. (Rom. 6: 19-23.)

One has only to go back to the first of the chapter from which the golden text is taken in order to see just what was done which resulted in the Roman brethren's being made free from sin, and becoming servants

of righteousness. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6: 3, 4; Gal. 3: 26, 27; 2 Cor. 5: 17.)

When a penitent believer who has been properly taught is baptized into Christ, he has obeyed from the heart that form or mold of teaching—he has obeyed the gospel; and being made free from sin, he has become a servant of righteousness. Such a person has, as it were, re-enacted the scheme of redemption in his own life. He has been molded, according to the gospel pattern, into a new creature in Christ. He has believed the facts of the gospel; he has obeyed its commands; and he can now enjoy its promises; and if he continues in the pathway of Christian duty, he will have an eternal home in the world to come.

The Text Explained

Jude, a Servant and a Brother
(Matt. 13: 55, 56; Jude 1, 2)

Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? There are some interesting things suggested in these verses regarding the life of Jesus, but the purpose in giving them here is to introduce us to the author of the epistle which we are now considering. It is assumed here that the Judas of this passage is the Jude who wrote the letter which bears his name.

Roman Catholic scholars have endeavored to show that the brothers named in this passage were only the cousins of Jesus. Their purpose in this is to avoid the insurmountable objections to their doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, that is, that Mary and Joseph were the parents of only one child, namely Jesus. But this is a theory born of necessity, and there is no foundation in fact for it.

Others have tried to show that these brothers were the children of Joseph by a former marriage, but

without any documentary evidence. The most probable view is the most natural one, namely, that these brothers were the sons of Joseph and Mary, and were, of course, born after the birth of Jesus. (Luke 2: 4-7.) An unbiased reading of Matt. 13: 54-58 leaves the impression that these four brothers were the half-brothers of Jesus. (Matt. 1: 18-25.)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother James. The fact that Jude does not make any reference to his relationship with Jesus may be explained on the basis that natural relationship was, in his mind, subordinate to the spiritual. (Luke 11: 27, 28.) Furthermore, Jude would shrink, as did his brother James (James 1: 1), from emphasizing a distinctive relationship which not even the apostles themselves could claim, and especially in view of his former attitude toward Jesus. (John 7: 5.) The mention of his natural relationship to James was probably made because the latter was well known, and that fact would be helpful to Jude in getting his message before the people, or, to express the same thing in other words, it would give him greater prestige. (Acts 15:

13-21; Gal. 2: 9, 11, 12; Acts 21: 17, 18.) James became one of the most influential men in the Jerusalem church of his day.

To them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ. Three things are here affirmed of the people to whom Jude wrote: (1) them that are called; (2) beloved in God the Father; and (3) kept for Jesus Christ. They were called in the sense of being invited to come to the Lord. (Rom. 1: 6; 2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.) The original words for "called" in these two passages are not the same, but there does not seem to be any basic differences in their practical application.

The word "beloved" expresses God's feeling toward those who have accepted the call (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8), while "kept" indicates that which is done to keep them safe. "And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17: 11, 12; Rom. 8: 31-39.) If we do our part, God's mercy will never fail us.

Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied. The richness of the language of this salutation is unsurpassed. The idea expressed is like a copious harvest, perpetually increasing; for from God proceeds not only the communication of blessing, but the ever increasing growth and augmentation of blessing. Mercy is God's compassion in the forgiveness of our sins; peace is the tranquil state which is ours as a result of his mercy in the pardon of our transgressions; while love is the expression of God's feeling toward us which makes it possible for us to become his children. (1 John 3: 1-3.)

His Reasons for Writing (Jude 3, 4)

Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the

saints. From this we learn that Jude had been diligently preparing to write a somewhat formal treatise on a subject which was of common interest to all of them, namely, the salvation which has been provided through Christ; but he was compelled to abandon that intention because of a situation which arose, thus making it necessary for them to defend their faith against certain insidious assaults which were being made upon it. This letter therefore was written to arouse them to action.

Jude calls the salvation which has been provided through Christ "our common salvation." This salvation, of course, is the salvation of the gospel; and when Paul wrote to Titus he spoke of the same thing, from a different viewpoint, when he said, "To Titus, my true child after a common faith." (Tit. 1: 4a.) Salvation is common because it is offered to all men on exactly the same terms. God is no respecter of persons. It is common because it deals with the same moral condition—sin. It is common because it is rooted in a sacrifice which affects all alike. It is common because it puts before all men the same hope of moral excellence.

While Jude was making preparations to write to the brethren on the common salvation, he was "constrained," that is, he found it necessary to urge them to contend earnestly for the faith itself. The faith refers to the gospel or the sum of that which Christians believe. (Acts 6: 7; Gal. 3: 23.) The word for "contend earnestly" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and it literally means to fight for. (Phil. 1: 27.) This faith must be preserved, for no other faith will be given; no other revelation will supersede it. This is a strong motive for resisting the heretical innovators, referred to in the following verse. The "saints," of course, are the Lord's people, Christians.

For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. We are not told specifically who these "certain men" were, but it is very probable that

they were the same as those described by Peter in his second letter, 2: 1-3: "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that brought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of which the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not. and their destruction slumbereth not." (Acts 20: 28-30; Gal. 2: 4, 5.)

This is enough to show the urgency of the situation, and it is easy to see why Jude had deliberately set aside his purpose of writing a formal treatise on their common salvation, and to make an effort to meet the immediate needs. The obnoxious people to whom reference is made had sneaked in, or slipped in stealthily, instead of letting their real purpose be known; they had, as it were, slipped in by a side door. Peter emphasizes their bringing in by stealth their destructive heresies. It is unfortunate that such people did not perish with that age, but they did not; many are still with us.

The manner in which the punishment of these heretics is stated is impressive, both in Jude and Second Peter. Both refer to the fact that their punishment had been foretold ages ago. God's eternal character as the punisher of sin, as set forth in the Old Testament, is probably what is meant by "written of beforehand." Arndt and Gingrich give us the meaning of the original word as used here, "who for a long time have been marked out (or written about) for this judgment (described in what follows)." (Rom. 15: 4.) The fact that they have been written of beforehand shows that they have already been doomed to destruction. They are therefore to be shunned by the faithful, but not to be feared; for, dangerous as they may seem, they cannot altar the divine purpose. (2 Pet. 2.) When it is said that ungodly men were "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," the reference is probably to Antonianism, which taught that since the gos-

pel had released them from the law, they were at liberty to give free rein to the desires of their flesh.

History's Warnings to the Ungodly (Jude 5-7)

Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. The three cases which are cited in this section of our lesson are intended to illustrate the impending judgment which was hanging over the ungodly men mentioned in the preceding verse. When Jude said that they knew "all things once for all," he was talking about things which they had previously learned. *about which there was no doubt.* It was the writer's purpose therefore to refresh their memory regarding these unmistakable examples.

God showed his mercy in delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, but that was no guarantee that they would remain in his favor. Any one who is familiar with Old Testament history knows that they were destroyed in the wilderness, with two exceptions, because of their unfaithfulness. (Num. 14: 26-38; Heb. 3: 7; 4: 2.)

And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. This reference is to fallen angels. "For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," (2 Pet. 2: 4.) The term "principality" means domain or sphere of influence, while "habitation" carries with it the idea of one's place of dwelling. These angels, while pure and holy at first, were cast into pits of darkness to await the judgment, because they failed to keep within their own sphere of influence and retain their own place of dwelling. This is even a more striking example of the possibility of falling away from God's favor.

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an ex-

ample, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. The account of the historical destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is found in Gen. 19. Two of the cities about them, Admah and Zeboiim, are mentioned in Deut. 29: 23; cf. Hos. 11:8. The two sins charged against the people of these cities are fornication and going after

strange flesh, the latter being what is today known as "sodomy," that is, carnal copulation which is both unnatural and forbidden. (Lev'. 18: 22, 23; Rom. 1: 26, 27.) Jude says that the punishment of these cities is laid out in plain sight and held up as a warning of the eternal destruction of hell fire.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

To what part of the New Testament does the epistle of Jude belong?
Why are they called general or "catholic" epistles?

What is the derivation of the name "Jude"?

How many "Judases" of the New Testament can you name?

To whom did Jude address his letter?

The Golden Text

What is the literal meaning of the term "servant"?
How do people today become servants of God?
What is the price which is paid for our redemption? and how are we and the price brought together?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

Jude, a Servant and a Brother

What is the purpose of the passage from Matthew in our lesson today?
Do you believe that the four brothers were actually the half-brothers of Jesus? Give reasons for your answer.
Why do some people try to show that they were not his brothers?
Why didn't Jude mention his relationship to Jesus? and why to James?
What three things are affirmed of the people to whom Jude wrote?
How are Christians "kept" for Jesus Christ?
What blessings did Jude mention in his salutation?

His Reasons for Writing

What had Jude been prepared to do?

Why did he change his plans?

Why is our salvation called "common"?

What is the meaning of the word "constrained"?

What is the faith for which Christians are to "contend"? and how is that to be done?

How did these evil men get access to the Lord's people?

Is anything like that ever done today?

If so, how may it be prevented?

In what way were these ungodly men "written of beforehand"?

How had they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness?

How had they denied the Lord Jesus Christ?

History's Warnings to the Ungodly

Of what did Jude desire to put them in remembrance?

What did he mean by saying that they knew "all things once for all"?

What lesson is taught by the example of the Israelites?

In what sense didn't they believe?

In what way did the angels fail to keep their principality and their proper habitation?

What does this show regarding the nature of angels?

In what way were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed?

Where were they probably located?

What sins were charged against them?

What kind of an example does Jude say that these wicked cities present?

In what way did their punishment resemble eternal punishment?

How is eternal punishment described in this lesson?

Do you think that people today should be warned frequently of the punishment which is promised the wicked? Give reasons for your answer.

Lesson XII—December 21, 1958

A WARNING OF EVIL MEN

Lesson Text

Jude 8-16

8 Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities.

9 But Mi'-cha-el the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Mo'-ses, durst not bring against him a railing

judgment, but said. The Lord rebuke thee.

10 But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed.

11 Woe unto them! for they went

in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Ba'-laam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Ko'-rah.

12 These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 Wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.

14 And to these also E'-noch, the GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen"* (2 Tim. 4: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—2 Pet. 2: 1-22.

Daily Bible Readings

December 15. M.....Warnings to the Wicked (Jer. 7: 13-25)
 December 16. T.....Terror at Judgment (Rev. 1: 1-7)
 December 17. W.....God Is Angry at the Wicked (Psalm 5: 1-6)
 December 18. T.....Wicked Hate Reproof (1 Kings 22: 1-8)
 December 19. F.....False Teachers (1 Tim. 4: 1-8)
 December 20. S.....Itching Ears (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)
 December 21. S.....Destiny of the Wicked (Ezek. 33: 7-20)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 65 and 70.

PLACE.—The place of writing is unknown.

PERSONS.—Jude and probably Hebrew Christians generally.

Introduction

When we read about the evil men described by Jude in our lesson for today, we naturally think of the conditions which Paul said would come in the last days. (2 Tim. 3: 1ff.) It appears, however, that the evil described by Jude was already at work when he wrote his epistle. At any rate, the picture in either case is a dark one. It shows something of the desperate effort which Satan is making to win as many from the Lord as he possibly can. Peter exhorts, "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world." (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9.)

is, in this world to the extent that it is utterly impossible for any one to live the Christian life without being sorely tried. Paul says, 'Tea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' (2 Tim. 3: 12.) This means that the closer one lives to Christ, the greater

seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones,

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

17 These are they who are

will be the care which he must exercise in his efforts to avoid the evil one. Wicked men, and even the devil himself, can be withstood. They are all vulnerable. James says, "Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4: 7.)

The devil, of course, knows that he cannot stand against the truth, but that alone will not defeat him, that is, that knowledge on his part. Any child of God can defeat him with the truth, but the devil is crafty enough to cause him to change his method of attack, if he is not extremely careful. It is easy for Satan to suggest that the Christian fight back with the devil's weapons, as may be seen in the text of our lesson today. If Satan can get people to harbor ill-will, bring railing accusations against their adversaries, and seek revenge, he has largely won the battle; but, like Paul, we should not be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2: 11.) The Lord's method of overcoming evil is set forth in such passages as Rom. 12: 21 and Eph. 6: 10-18.

The Golden Text

"The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." When Paul wrote these words he was in the Roman prison awaiting his summons to go and be with Jesus. He had said in the earlier part of the chapter from which this expression of his confidence is taken, "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.)

The words of the golden text, as already indicated, are an expression of the confidence in the final outcome of things which Paul enjoyed as he considered his relationship with evil men. The full context is as follows: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: of whom

do thou also beware; for he greatly withstood our words. At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." (2 Tim. 4: 14-18.)

The confidence which Paul enjoyed is the confidence which we all should have. Evil men are in the world, and they will be here until the end of time; but the Lord is able to protect all those who put their trust in him. God has not promised to protect his people from the abuse of evil men, but he has promised to see that the welfare of their souls is not adversely affected, if they will only do as he tells them to do. We must not have an indifferent or compromising attitude toward evil, but we must deal with it in the fear of God and in the Spirit of Christ.

The Text Explained

The Arrogance of the Wicked (Jude 8-10)

Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at naught dominion, and rail at dignities. The expression "yet in like manner" implies a connection between this section of our lesson and the preceding verses, especially verse 7.

In the three verses just mentioned, Jude showed how punishment follows a departure from the Lord's favor; but those examples did not have any restraining effect on the sinners of his day. They persisted in their sins, notwithstanding the clear-cut evidence that their sins would be punished. Verse 7 mentions the vicious sins of the flesh which the people of Sodom and Gomorrah committed, but the terrible example of their punishment did not deter the libertines of Jude's day.

The dreamy state of the people about whom Jude wrote led them into three deadly wrongs, as set forth iii verse 8. (1) They defiled the

flesh; (2) they set at naught dominion; and (3) they railed at dignities. The word "dreamings" implies that their own inflated imaginations caused them to mistake the real for the unreal, or vice versa. They were deluded and blinded, and did not hesitate to engage in the basest sins of the flesh. One of the best commentaries on this phase of their life is Rom. 1: 18-32. It is difficult for moral people to imagine such vicious sins.

The word "dominion" probably refers to angelic dignities. (Eph. 1: 21; Col. 1: 16; 2 Pet. 2: 10.) It is possible, of course, that the term could include high authority, both human and divine, and these libertines would not hesitate to refuse to recognize, or reject, them; for this is the meaning of "set at naught." "EHgiiities" also refer to "glorious angelic beings," and the people about whom Jude was writing did not hesitate to blaspheme them.

But Michael the archangel, when

contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses. durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* This is an example of the kind of restraint that should characterize all who fear God. Here was Michael, one of the archangels, that is, one of the highest orders of angels (Dan. 10: 13, 31; 12: 1; Rev. 12: 7). who doubtless knew the truth regarding nature of the devil and of his fall from his original purity, but he did not dare to pronounce a railing judgment upon him, but left that matter in the hands of God. This attitude on the part of Michael reminds us of a similar attitude on the part of Peter, who, when speaking of Judas, did not pronounce a judgment upon him, but simply said that he went to his own place. (Acts 1: 25.)

There is no record as to when or where this dispute between Michael and the devil took place. (Deut. 34:

6.) Some Bible students have assumed that Jude was referring to some apocryphal writing, but such a conclusion is not at all necessary, and especially if Jude is regarded as inspired. Paul, more than once, put into his writings statements of fact, concerning which we have no further evidence regarding their origin. (Acts 20: 35; 2 Tim. 3: 8: [the names Jannes and Jambres are not mentioned in the Exodus record]: Acts 7: 22.)

Many, professed Christians today, who are not as high in the council of heaven as was Michael, do not hesitate to bring railing judgments against their own brethren, who are much better than the devil. Such a practice does not meet with God's approval, and we all should benefit by the example of the archangel now under consideration. "Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law. and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou are not a doer of the law, but a judge. One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?" (James 4: 11, 12; 2 Pet. 2: 10, 11.)

But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures

without reason, in these things are they destroyed. These libertines about whom Jude writes manifest an attitude which is the exact opposite of that which was shown by the archangel Michael. He knew the facts concerning the devil, but he did not bring a railing judgment against him. But the wicked men of the text now before us did not hesitate to rail at the spiritual world of which they knew nothing. (1 Cor. 2: 6-16.) "These things" refer to what they understand naturally, that is, the things of the flesh: and they are the things which will ultimately destroy them. Peter's comment regarding them is as follows: "But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed." (2 Pet. 2: 12.)

Their Wickedness Illustrated

(Jude 11-13)

Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. The word "woe," as used here, is found frequently in the Gospels and Revelation, but in the epistles only here and in 1 Cor. 9: 16. It is an interjection denoting pain or displeasure. The sins denounced by Jude in this verse are illustrated by Cain, Balaam, and Korah. The way of Cain was the substitution of his own will and way for that of God. He is the father of religious rationalism. (Gen. 4: 1-8.) Balaam's error was his effort to seduce Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication, for his personal gain. (Num. 22: 1: 25: 18; Rev. 2: 14: 2 Pet. 2: 15.) The gainsaying of Korah was rebellion against divinely constituted authority. (Num. 16: 1-50.)

These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves: clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever. Vincent quotes Dean Alford as saying regarding Jude's language, "It is an im-

passioned invective, in which the writer heaps epithet on epithet, and image on image, and returns again and again to the licentious apostates against whom he warns the church, as though all language were insufficient to give an adequate idea of their profligacy, and of his own abhorrence of their perversion of the grace and doctrines of the Gospel." It appears that these false teachers used whatever gifts they may have had for the purposes of self-aggrandizement, and endeavored to make their services attractive by excluding from religion all that is strenuous and difficult, and thus opening the door to every kind of indulgence.

These false teachers are described as hidden rocks in their love-feasts, the idea being that they were sources of real danger of wrecking the faith of innocent brethren as a ship might be similarly wrecked when it struck rocks which were invisible. Arndt and Gingrich hold that the "love-feasts" were common meals which the early Christians ate in connection with their religious services. These feasts were not the Lord's supper, but it appears that they were eaten just before or just after the Lord's supper. It was the abuse of this practice which called forth Paul's rebuke in 1 Cor. 11: 17-34. So, without any reverence (fear), these "shepherds" feed themselves (at your love-feasts) instead of seeing that the flock was carefully fed. (Ezek. 34: 2.)

It is disappointing when rain is expected from clouds to have them pass away without yielding their refreshing showers; and so, when teachers make their promises, nothing but disappointment results if they fail to carry them out. These evil men were professors without practice. (Prov. 25: 14.) Substantially the same idea is found in the expression regarding the fruitless trees, that is, trees which have no fruit at the time of harvest have not fulfilled the purpose for which they exist, any more than waterless clouds (Arndt and Gingrich). Twice dead, that is, apparently dead during the winter months and actually dead, along with being plucked up by the roots, would make any further hope for fruit utterly impossible.

In commenting on verse 13, J. B.

Mayor, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, offers this suggestion. "The two former illustrations, the reefs and the clouds, refer to the specious professions of the libertines and the mischief they caused: the third, the dead trees, bring out also their own miserable condition: the fourth and fifth give a very fine description of their lawlessness and shamelessness, and their eventual fate." Just as the wild or untamed waves bear refuse upon their crest and throw it upon the beach, so these ungodly teachers foam out the overflowings of ungodliness upon the unsuspecting hearers. (Isa. 57: 20.) In a similar manner, the false teachers profess to give light and guidance, but they are only blind leaders of the blind, and their end is everlasting darkness. Neither the waves nor the stars about which Jude speaks are governed by law, and they must eventually be destroyed.

The Ultimate Fate of the Wicked (Jude 14-16)

And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousand of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. Many Bible students are of the opinion that Jude got his information regarding the prophecy of Enoch from an apocryphal source called the "Book of Enoch," but no one has brought forth the proof that the *Book of Enoch*, which is in existence, is as old as the *Epistle of Jude*! It is altogether possible, therefore, and entirely probable that the author of the *Book of Enoch* copied from Jude, rather than that Jude copied from Enoch. If Jude was inspired, as is assumed here, then it is easy for us to understand how Jude got his information regarding the prophecy of Enoch.

It was upon the assumption of Jude's so-called references to apocryphal writings (verses 9, 14, 15) that caused some scholars to question the authority of the *Epistle of Jude*. This only shows what an unfounded assumption will lead to. Jude wrote by inspiration and was not depend-

ent upon uninspired sources for any information contained in his letter.

It is interesting to observe the play which Jude makes upon the term "ungodly." The reference is to an impious or wicked person, and the works of ungodliness, as the deeds which naturally flow from such a life. It is not difficult therefore to understand how such people would be capable of speaking harsh and unpleasant words against the Lord. But the day of reckoning is coming, and that fact was known at least in the days of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. (Gen. 5.)

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts (and

their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage. After having given Enoch's description of the ungodly, Jude now adds his word regarding them. They are "murmurers," that is, they were dissatisfied with life in general, and felt that providence was unkind to them. The word also probably indicates that they also murmured against God's way. as Korah did. Complainers means fault-finders. They walked after the flesh and gave way to its lusts, while speaking haughty and bombastic words and showing respect of persons in order to profit thereby themselves.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

Why are there so many evil people in the world? and what use are they being put to?

Why is it impossible to live for God without suffering persecution?

Are Christians at the mercy of the ungodly? Give reasons for your answer.

What is God's method of dealing with evil? and what does he expect his people to do about it?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were these words spoken? and what do they express?

Is Paul's attitude in this respect a necessary example for us? Give reasons for your answer.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Arrogance of the Wicked

How is this lesson related to the previous one?

What had Jude shown in the latter part of the previous lesson? and how had it affected the sinners about whom he was writing?

What is meant by their "dreamings" and what were the issues of their life?

What did Paul have to say about such things?

How is it possible for people to sink so low in sin?

Who is Michael? and what is said of him here?

Why didn't he bring a railing judgment against the devil?

Is the example he set applicable to us today? Give reasons for your answer.

Where did Jude get his information regarding Michael's dispute with the devil?

What is meant by saying that "these rail at whatsoever things they know not"?

What did they "understand naturally"?

Their Wickedness Illustrated

What does the term "woe" mean?

How did Jude illustrate the wickedness of these people?

What was (1) the way of Cain? (2) the error of Balaam? and (3) the gainsaying of Korah?

In what way were these false teachers "hidden rocks" in their love-feasts?

What were their love-feasts? and why don't we have them today?

How did these "shepherds" conduct themselves at the love-feasts?

What is the lesson taught by "clouds without water" and "autumn trees without fruit"?

How were the trees "twice dead"?

How do wild waves foam out their own shame? and what is the lesson taught?

What is the lesson of the wandering stars? and what is their fate?

The Ultimate Fate of the Wicked

Who was Enoch and what did he prophesy?

Where did Jude get his information regarding him? Give reasons for your answer.

Discuss his play upon the term "ungodly"?

How did Jude himself describe these false teachers? and what did he mean by the terms he used?

Lesson XIII—December 28, 1958

KEEPING IN THE LOVE OF GOD

Lesson Text

Jude 17-25

17 But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Je'-sus Christ;

18 That they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Je'-sus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And on some have mercy, who are in doubt;

23 And some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have

mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy,

25 To the only God our Saviour, through Je'-sus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. A-men'.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Let all that ye do be done in love"* (1 Cor. 16: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 8: 26-39.

Daily Bible Readings

December 22. M.....	Way of Escape from Temptation (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)
December 23. T.....	Peace Guards Us (Phil. 4: 1-7)
December 24. W.....	Nothing Can Separate Us (Rom. 8: 31-39)
December 25. T.....	Love God with All Our Being (Deut. 6: 1-5)
December 26. F.....	God Is Love (1 John 4: 12-21)
December 27. S.....	Love Shown in Keeping His Word (1 John 5: 1-3)
December 28. S.....	Mercy to Those Who Love Him (Ex. 20: 1-6)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 65 and 70.

PLACE.—The place of writing is unknown.

PERSONS.—Jude and probably Hebrew Christians generally.

Introduction

Today's lesson brings us to the close of our studies for 1958; and it would be difficult to find a subject which has a greater interest for us, or which is more satisfying. The love of God, as expressed in John 3: 16, has been called the golden text of the Bible, because it expresses in few words the real messages of the sacred text. The passage reads: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." This passage gives us a comprehensive view of the subject before us today.

The greatest manifestations of God's love is seen in the gift of his Son to suffer and die for the sins which were committed against him. Paul sums up the matter in these words: "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 6-8.) That which is said in the two passages

which have been quoted represents God's side of the question; these scriptures tell us what God has done for us. This, indeed, is the motive behind the whole of the scheme of human redemption. But there is another side of the question which must be considered.

When one reads the lesson text for today, he will observe that Christians are exhorted to *keep* themselves in the love of God. This shows that we have a responsibility regarding this great attribute of our heavenly Father. To keep ourselves in the love of God requires an effort on our part. It means that we must conduct ourselves in such a way as will make it possible for God to continue to love us. We can do this only by learning to love ourselves, that is, we ourselves must learn to love. "He that loveth not abideth in death." (1 John 3: 14b.) "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith,

so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,

and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. 13: 1-3.)

The Golden Text

"Let all that ye do be done in love" This is the over-all motive which must govern the child of God in all the activities of his life. Paul teaches us in Gal. 5: 6 that the important thing is "faith working through love." Love is the very spirit of Christianity. In response to a question as to which is the greatest commandment in the law. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." (Matt. 22: 37-40.) That which was true of the Old Testament is equally true of the New. (Rom. 13: 8-10.)

The New Testament plainly teaches, over and over again, that no one can be saved who does not act on the principle of love. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us:

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion for him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 14-18.)

When one's attitudes and actions are always motivated by love, he will not be in danger of going astray; for he will always be seeking the glory of God and the best interests of his fellow man. If anyone feels that it is difficult to follow the injunction in the Golden Text, he should learn that the word for love there represents the highest possible manifestation of that attribute; it is based on moral choice and is *something which one can learn to do*. The requirement is so great, in fact, that one cannot love God without loving his fellow man. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John 4: 20, 21.)

The Text Explained

The Call to Remember Apostolic Warnings (Jude 17-19)

But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. While the evidence here is not conclusive, it does, nevertheless, give sufficient ground for thinking that Jude was not an apostle. There is no direct evidence here or elsewhere which shows that Jude was an apostle: but there is some which strongly indicates that he was not an apostle. It has already been pointed out, for one thing, that he did not even believe in Jesus during the latter part of his public ministry. (John 7: 5.)

Peter's exhortation along the line

of Jude's reads as follows: "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles." (2 Pet. 3: 1, 2.) This is, of course, the language of an apostle, and the difference between the two statements is sufficient to make one think that Jude was not an apostle. Both statements, however, suggest that the readers had heard the apostles deliver these warnings in person.

That they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking

after their own ungodly lusts. Peter makes direct reference to this in his second letter: "Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. 3: 3, 4; 2 Tim. 3: 1-13.) While it is true that what Peter said in the quotation just given was "written," it is also true that in verses 1 and 2 he exhorted them to remember the things which had been previously spoken.

The particular thing which Jude wanted the brethren to remember was that "mockers" would be present in the last day. Peter says that they would come with "mockery," and he goes on to say that one form which their mockery would take would be the denial of the second coming of Christ. But Peter, who goes on into greater detail than Jude, answers that by saying, "For this they willfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God: by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3: 5-7.)

When ungodly men turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (verse 4), it is natural for them to mock at the narrowness and want of enlightenment (in their estimation) on the part of those who accept the word of God literally and are serious about their obedience to it. Furthermore, if the false teachers made light of authority and treated spiritual things with irreverence, if they foamed out their own shame and uttered proud and impious words, and if they denied both the Father and the Son, it would be natural for them to ridicule the idea of a judgment to come. This course is but the natural outcome of lustful living.

These are they who make separations. sensual, having not the Spirit. These mockers can be easily identified by their fruits: for that is a criterion which never fails. (Matt. 7:

20.) Those who "make separations" are those who divide the church into factions, or, as Vincent has it, those who draw a line through the church and set off one part from another. Paul expresses the same idea in Gal. 5: 20. (James 3: 14-16.) To be "sensual" is to be natural and unrenewed (unregenerated), or, which is the same thing, to be governed by gross passions and appetites. People who live in this manner are in the flesh and are without the Holy Spirit. Not only were these people without the guidance and fruit of the Spirit; they were also incapable of any communion with the Spirit. People who live after this fashion cannot please God. (Rom. 8: 5-17; 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.)

Jude's Final Charge to the Faithful (Jude 20-23)

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith. The exhortation to the faithful is in marked contrast with that which is found in the preceding section. There they were warned against those who make separations, but here it is building. The foundation on which the building is to be done is "your most holy faith." This reminds us of Peter's statement in 2 Pet. 1: 5: "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue;" etc. Faith is the basis for all acceptable service in the kingdom of Christ. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him." (Heb. 11: 6a; Eph. 2: 19-22; 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17.) The work of building is our responsibility.

Praying in the Holy Spirit. The heretics have not the Spirit (verse 19), but the faithful are to pray in the Holy Spirit. This is also opposed to the "natural" condition of the ungodly teachers. To pray in the Spirit is to pray as the Spirit directs and in accordance with the Spirit's teaching. "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8: 26, 27; Eph. 6: 17, 18.)

Keep yourselves in the love of God. The Lord's people must not be content with the belief that God loves them; they must also keep themselves in God's love, that is, they must conduct themselves in such a manner as will permit God to continue to love them. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15: 10.) This is the only principle which can be followed for "attaining that result. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.)

Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. It appears that the term "mercy," as used here, is a summation of all that which makes our final salvation possible. In writing to Titus, Paul said, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." (Tit. 2: 11-14.) The ultimate goal of every faithful child of God is a life of eternal duration with him in the world to come.

And on some have mercy, who are in doubt. If we expect the Lord to show mercy to us, then we must be merciful. (Matt. 5: 7; 18: 21-35; James 2: 13.) The "some" on whom we are to have mercy are described as being in doubt, that is, those who are wavering or hesitating—those who are not sure of themselves. This could refer to people who are in danger of falling away, or to some among the ungodly who might be won to the truth. Such people deserve the kind consideration of those who are spiritually strong. (Gal 6: 1, 2.)

And some save, snatching them out of the fire. There are some people who are so steeped in error and sin as to make their salvation comparable to snatching them out of the fire.

This should be a lesson to those who are inclined to think that there is no need to try and save some. The figure used here is also found in the Old Testament. "I have overthrown cities among you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith Jehovah." (Amos 4: 11.)

And on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. This seems to refer to an extreme case, that is, even in instances where there is most to fear, let your compassion go out to the lost, while you abhor the pollution of his sin. (Zech. 3: 1-4; James 5: 19, 20.) The original word for "spotted" occurs only twice in the New Testament—here and in James 3: 6. Its meaning is to stain or defile.

Ascription and Benediction (Jude 24, 25)

This doxology includes three parts or distinct ideas, namely, (1) preservation; (2) presentation; and (3) praise, and we shall deal with them in this order.

Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling. Throughout this epistle, Jude has been dealing with the idea of apostasy or the ungodly; and now as he nears the close of his letter, he wants his brethren to know that they are serving a Father who can keep them even from stumbling, to say nothing of apostasy. This, however, does not mean that God will do this arbitrarily; his people must do their part. They must build themselves up on their most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; and keep themselves in the love of God. If they do their part, they can be certain that God will do his. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." That is man's part. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." That is God's part. (1 Cor. 10: 12, 13; 2 Pet. 1: 3-11.)

And to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy. The idea here seems

to be that God, like some great artist, having finished a work of art, *sets* it in some conspicuous place where it can be seen by everyone. The place of this exhibit is "before the presence of his glory." This, of course, means the eternal home of the soul. Paul expresses the matter in these words, "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.)

Those who reach the city of God will be "without blemish in exceed-

ing joy." This is possible because of the sacrifice which Christ made in order to cleanse men from sin. (Eph. 5: 25-27.) This presentation to God is the perfection of holiness which is in store for those who are the "saints of God" here upon the earth; and the joy which shall be theirs is "unspeakable and full of glory."

To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore, Amen. This divine anthem is made up of four well known words of praise, glory, majesty, dominion, and power, and they are all ascribed to God who saves us through Christ. They are his (1) "before all time;" (2) "and now;" and (3) "for evermore." *So may it be!*

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, persons.

Introduction

What can you say of the appropriateness of the subject for the closing of the year?
What is meant by the love of God? and what is its greatest manifestation?
What responsibility do we have in connection with his love?
Why can't one please God without love?

The Golden Text

What is the purpose of Paul's statement in the golden text?
Why is love for God and man the greatest of the commandments?
How does John illustrate the principle of love?
Why can't one love God without loving his brother?

THE TEXT EXPLAINED

The Call to Remember

Apostolic Warnings

Was Jude an apostle of Christ? Give reasons for your answer.
What words did Jude want the brethren to remember?
How are the "mockers" described?
What does it mean for one to mock?
What does it mean for one to "make separations"?
What is a "sensual" person and what does it mean not to have the Spirit?
Why is it impossible for people without the Spirit to please God?

Jude's Final Charge to the Faithful

How can people build themselves up on their most holy faith?

Why can't people please God without faith?
What does it mean to pray in the Holy Spirit?
How does the Spirit help our infirmities in connection with praying?
What does it mean for one to keep himself in the love of God? and how can he do it?
Why aren't the commandments of God grievous to the Christian?
What does Jude mean by the "mercy" of the Lord? and how do we look for it?
Why won't God be merciful to the "unmerciful"?
Who are the people "in doubt" on whom Christians are to have mercy?
How can they save, snatching them out of the fire?
What lesson should this teach us?
What does it mean to have mercy with fear, while hating even the garments spotted by the flesh?

Ascription and Benediction

What are the three parts of this doxology?
What does it mean for God to guard his people from stumbling?
Upon what condition does he do this?
What does it mean for one to be "set" in the presence of God's glory?
What is it to be without blemish in exceeding joy?
What is the relation between "saints" here and the "perfection of holiness" over there?
In what way is God our Saviour?
What four things are ascribed to him?
How wide is the application of the ascription according to Jude?
What is the meaning of "Amen"?
Do you honestly believe that you are better for having studied the Epistle of Jude? Give reasons for your answer.