
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

1960

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

THIRTY-NINTH 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 1959 by
GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
Nashville, Tennessee

P R E F A C E

There is no greater work today than that of teaching men the way of the Lord, and every one who enjoys that opportunity should consider himself fortunate indeed. The reason behind all of this is the fact that Christianity is a taught religion. No one can become a Christian without being taught the truth, and no one can live the Christian life without being taught the will of the Lord.

While Jesus was engaged in his personal ministry, he said, "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.) And then just before Christ ascended back to the Father, he charged his disciples, "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, 20.)

The great work of bringing men back to God through Christ began on the first Pentecost following the Lord's ascension, and the first effort at making disciples of all the nations was made that day. Peter and the other apostles, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, *taught* the people the truth regarding Jesus, and they that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. Thus began the church, and the first recorded word of church history says, "And they continued stedfastly *in the apostles' teaching and fellowship*, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2: 42.)

A glance at the lessons for this year will reveal a wonderful course of study. The first quarter is devoted to studies in Mark's record of the life of Jesus, and that will be followed by similar studies in Luke during the second quarter. In the third quarter we return to the Old Testament, and consider some of the lessons in the lives of two men who were types of Christ—Moses and Joshua. Cf. Rom. 15: 4. The fourth quarter will be devoted to studies in the first half of John's record of the gospel.

This is the thirty-ninth annual volume which the Gospel Advocate Company has published for use of churches of Christ; and the fifteenth which has borne the title, *Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible School Lessons*. Both the author and the publishers sincerely trust that this volume will prove to be helpful to the many thousands of teachers and students who make use of it throughout the year.

THE AUTHOR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSONS FOR 1960

FIRST QUARTER

The Beginning of the Gospel	Lesson I—January 3	Mark 1: 1-11
Miracles of Healing	Lesson II—January 10	Mark 1: 29-42
Ministering to Spiritual Needs	Lesson III—January 17	Mark 2: 1-12
Jesus Stills the Sea	Lesson IV—January 24	Mark 4: 35-41
Life from the Dead	Lesson V—January 31	Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43
Jesus Teaches in the Synagogue	Lesson VI—February 7	Mark 6: 1-13
Feeding the Multitudes	Lesson VII—February 14	Mark 6: 30-44
Authority in Religious Activity	Lesson VIII—February 21	Mark 7: 1-13
Worldly Ambition Condemned	Lesson IX—February 28	Mark 9: 33-43
The Sanctity of the Home	Lesson X—March 6	Mark 10: 2-12
Jesus Declares His Kingship	Lesson XI—March 13	Mark 11: 1-10
The First and Second Commandments	Lesson XII—March 20	Mark 12: 28-40
The Great Commission by Mark	Lesson XIII—March 27	Mark 16: 9-11, 14-20

SECOND QUARTER

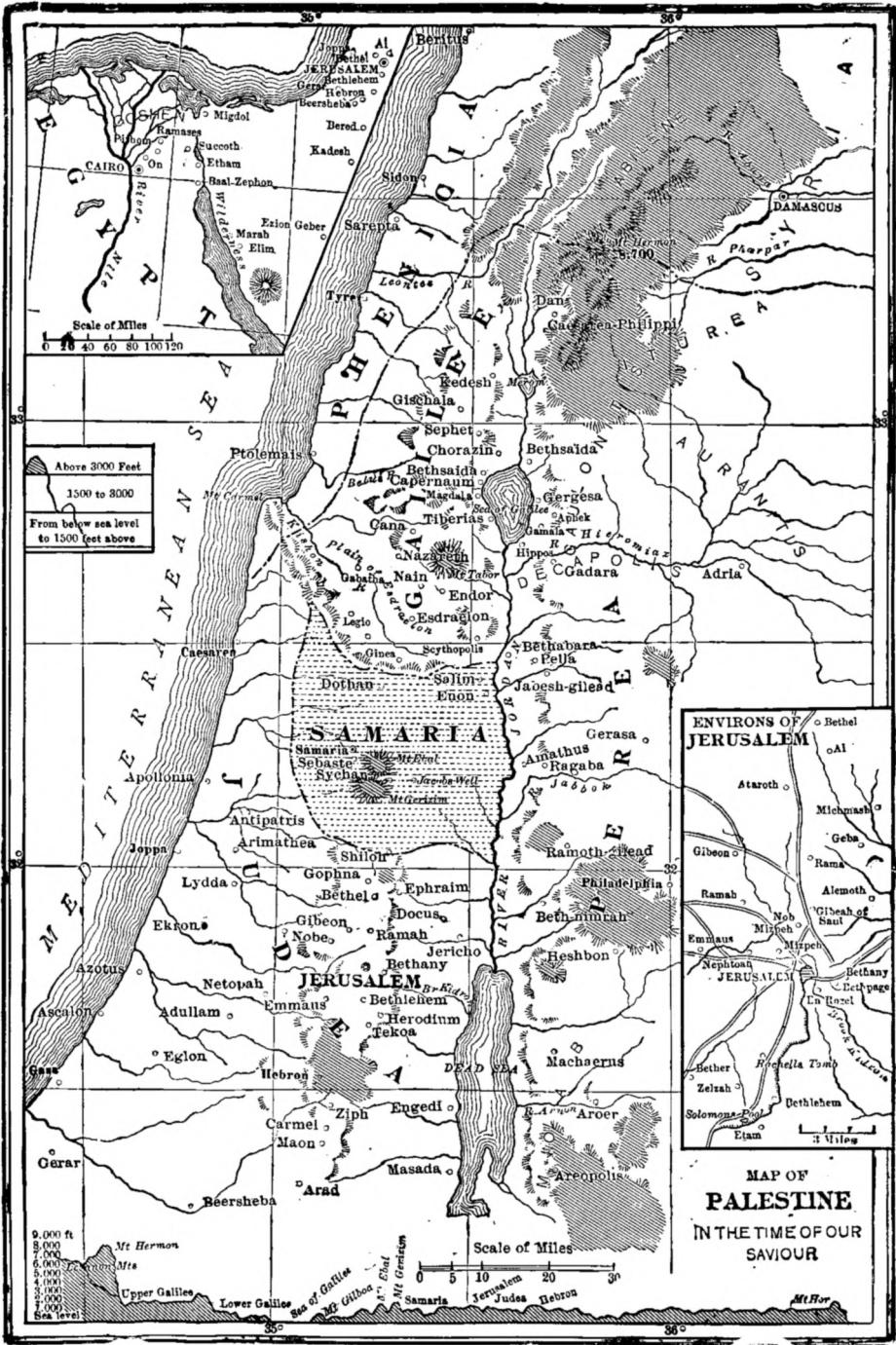
Birth of John the Baptist	Lesson I—April 3	Luke 1: 8-17, 57, 80
The Childhood of Jesus	Lesson II—April 10	Luke 2: 40-52
Jesus Announces His Purpose	Lesson III—April 17	Luke 4: 16-30
Jesus Teaches Righteousness	Lesson IV—April 24	Luke 6: 39-49
Jesus and the Man Possessed of Demons	Lesson V—May 1	Luke 8: 26-37
Who Is My Neighbor?	Lesson VI—May 8	Luke 10: 25-37
Jesus and the Sabbath	Lesson VII—May 15	Luke 13: 10-17
The Great Supper	Lesson VIII—May 22	Luke 14: 15-24
The Prodigal Son	Lesson IX—May 29	Luke 15: 11-24
The Rich Man and Lazarus	Lesson X—June 5	Luke 16: 19-31
Jesus and Zaccheus	Lesson XI—June 12	Luke 19: 1-10
Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper	Lesson XII—June 19	Luke 22: 13-23
The Resurrection and Ascension	Lesson XIII—June 26	Luke 24: 25-40, 50, 51

THIRD QUARTER

Israel Enslaved in Egypt	Lesson I—July 3	Ex. 1: 6-14, 2: 23-25
The Call of Moses	Lesson II—July 10	Ex. 3: 10-15; 4: 10-12
The Passover	Lesson III—July 17	Ex. 12: 21-30
God Delivers His People	Lesson IV—July 24	Ex. 14: 10-16, 21. 22
God Feeds His People	Lesson V—July 31	Ex. 16: 11-20, 35
Israel at Sinai	Lesson VI—August 7	Ex. 20: 1-17
The Tabernacle	Lesson VII—August 14	Ex. 33: 7-16
Proper Choices in Life	Lesson VIII—August 21	Deut. 11: 8-12, 26-32
Report of the Spies	Lesson IX—August 27	Num. 13: 1-3, 25-33
Joshua Succeeds Moses	Lesson X—September 4	Num. 27: 18-20; Josh. 1: 1-9
The Fall of Jericho	Lesson XI—September 11	Josh. 6: 12-20
Joshua and Caleb	Lesson XII—September 18	Josh. 14: 6-15
Joshua's Last Days	Lesson XIII—September 25	Josh. 24: 14-29

FOURTH QUARTER

Christ the True Light	Lesson I—October 2	John 1: 1-14
The First Disciples of Jesus	Lesson II—October 9	John 1: 35-46
Jesus' First Miracle	Lesson III—October 16	John 2: 1-11
Jesus Cleanses the Temple	Lesson IV—October 23	John 2: 13-22
The New Birth	Lesson V—October 30	John 3: 1-10
Jesus and the Samaritan Woman	Lesson VI—November 6	John 4: 7-14, 20-26
Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes	Lesson VII—November 13	John 6: 1-14
Jesus Walks Upon the Sea	Lesson VIII—November 20	John 6: 15-24
Freedom through the Truth	Lesson IX—November 27	John 8: 30-40
Jesus and the Man Born Blind	Lesson X—December 4	John 9: 1-11
The Pharisees and the Man Born Blind	Lesson XI—December 11	John 9: 13-18, 26-38
Jesus the Good Shepherd	Lesson XII—December 13	John 10: 1-16
Jesus at the Feast of the Dedication	Lesson XIII—December 25	John 10: 22-30, 41, 42



Scale of Miles
0 20 40 60 80 100 120

Above 3000 Feet
1500 to 3000
From below sea level
to 1500 feet above



MAP OF
PALESTINE
IN THE TIME OF OUR
SAVIOUR

9,000 ft
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
Sea level

Scale of Miles
0 5 10 20 30

Mt Hermon
Mts
Upper Galilee
Lower Galilee
Sea of Galilee
Mt Gilboa
Mt Gerizim
Samaris
Jerusalem
Judas
Hebron
Mt Hor

FIRST QUARTER STUDIES IN MARK

AIM.—To study carefully the Gospel according to Mark, to note particularly the grace and power exhibited by our Lord and evidenced in its pages, and to strive for a greater vision of duty and devotion to the cause for which he gladly gave his life.

Lesson I—January 3, 1960

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

Lesson Text Mark 1s 1-11

1 The beginning of the gospel of Je'-sus Christ, the Son of God.

2 Even as it is written in I-sa'-iah the prophet,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,

Who shall prepare thy way

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord,

Make his paths straight;

4 John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the country of Ju-dae'-a, and they all of Je-ru'-sa-lem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair and *had* a leathern girdle

about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey.

7 And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Je'-sus came from Naz'-areth of Gal'-i-lee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”*
(Matt. 3: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 40: 3-11.

Daily Bible Readings

December 28. M.....	Preparing the Way (Mark 1: 1-8)
December 29. T.....	John's Preaching (Luke 3: 7-17)
December 30. W.....	John's Testimony of Jesus (John 1: 25-36)
December 31. T.....	Importance of Preparation (Jonah 3: 1-10)
January 1. F.....	Personal Preparation (Psalm 51: 1-13)
January 2. S.....	God's Highway of Holiness (Isa. 40: 3-11)
January 3. S.....	John Baptizes Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-15)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—The wilderness of Judaea.

PERSONS.—John, the people, Jesus, the Spirit, and the Father.

Introduction

While the book itself does not give the name of its author, Bible students are generally agreed among them-

selves that the writer was John Mark whose name is found eight times in the New Testament—four times in

Acts, three in Paul's epistles, and once in Peter's. He was the son of a well known woman, probably a widow at the time of her mention in Acts 12, whose home was a gathering place for the disciples. (See Acts 12:

12.) He went with Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 12: 25), and then accompanied them on their first missionary journey as far as Perga. (Acts 13: 5, 13.) Mark's action in leaving them did not please Paul, and he refused to allow Mark to accompany them on their proposed second journey; and after Paul and Barnabas decided to go their separate ways, Mark went with Barnabas. (Acts 15: 36-41.)

It is refreshing to learn, however, that Mark was later restored to Paul's confidence, and became a useful minister under the latter's direction. (Phile. 24; Col. 4: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 11.) We also learn from Col. 4: 10 that Mark and Barnabas were cousins. Peter calls Mark his son which may mean that he was converted by Peter, or, perhaps, because of Peter's close relationship to him in the home of his mother. Many Bible students are of the opinion that Mark wrote the narrative which bears his name under the direction of Peter. At any rate, Mark was eminently fitted to write the record. The view taken here is

that it is an independent record, being neither a condensation of Matthew and Luke, nor the basis for the expansion of the first and third gospels.

There are two statements in Mark's gospel, both peculiar to him, which might conceivably contain hints as to the authorship of the record. The first one is 14: 51, 52: "And a certain young man followed with him, having a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked body; and they lay hold on him; and he left the linen cloth, and fled naked." This may have been Mark himself, and the very mention of the incident reminds us of a similar practice by John, that is, mentioning incidents involving himself without recording his name. The other reference is 16: 7: "But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." Peter was probably singled out for special attention because of the memory of his denial and his gratitude for this special word of encouragement. McGarvey points out that only seventy-eight days are represented in the entire Book of Mark, and if the forty days of temptation are subtracted, then the total of all other incidents embrace only thirty-eight days. It is easy to see from this that Mark's record is the most lively of the four.

The Golden Text

"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" There are three ideas in this short text which deserve consideration, namely, (1) repent; (2) kingdom of heaven; and (3) at hand. The term "repent" literally means a change of mind regarding sin. The kind of repentance which pleases the Lord is produced by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7: 10), and it results in fruits in keeping with the change which has been determined. See Matt. 3: 8. Repentance was necessary on the part of the people to whom John preached, in order to fit them for the reception of the new order which was near at hand.

The *kingdom of heaven* has reference to the government which Christ would establish. The Israelites had long been citizens of the kingdom which had been set up in the days of Samuel. That kingdom, however,

had never been intended to last forever (cf. Hos. 13: 11); but it did give the people an idea of what it meant to be citizens of a kingdom. The approaching kingdom is called the kingdom of heaven, because the authority for it came from God, and the king himself would reign from his throne in heaven. It should be kept in mind that the kingdom of heaven and the church of Christ are one and the same thing. Kingdom emphasizes the governmental feature of the institution, while church emphasizes the called out or separated feature.

The expression "at hand" would be understood by the people as indicating the near approach of the kingdom. The Israelites had long been in a state of expectancy, and this announcement, of course, would create within them great interest. But

however great their interest, no one would get the idea that the kingdom had already come—had already been established. Goodspeed renders the passage, "Repent!" he said, "for the Kingdom of Heaven is coming!" This shows that the kingdom was not established in the days of John, prior to this time; and the fact that Jesus

himself told his disciples, a short time before his death, that some who were then present would not die "till they see the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9: 1), is all the proof one needs to convince him that the kingdom was not set up during the days of John the Baptist or the personal ministry of Christ.

The Text Explained

Mark's Beginning Point

(Mark 1: 1-3)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark does not mean to say that he is beginning with the very origin of the gospel, but rather is stating the point at which his narrative begins. One has only to consult the other three records in order to see that many things in the life of Christ which preceded Mark's beginning point were omitted by him. Matthew began his record with the genealogy of Jesus; Luke started with the prediction of the birth of the harbinger of Christ; while John went back to the beginning of all things. Mark makes no mention of the birth or early life of Jesus, but plunges at once into his public ministry. And, too, he is dealing with God's Son, not man.

Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way; The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight; This prophetic citation is from two prophets, rather than from Isaiah alone. (Cf. the King James Version.) The quotations are from Mal. 3: 1 and Isa. 40: 3. McGarvey points out that the reading of the text now before us is in keeping with the original, rather than the Authorized Version; and he suggests that Mark probably listed only Isaiah because the essential part of the quotation was from him.

"My messenger" shows that the mission of John the Baptist was authorized by God and that he was sent by him (see John 1: 6), and his task was to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. The manner in which this work was done will be seen further on in this study. Isaiah based his prediction on the well known practice of preparing the road

over which kings of their countries would pass in travelling through their realms.

The Mission of John

(Mark 1: 4-8)

John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. This shows that **John** was the "messenger" who was to come; and he was the first person who ever preached "baptism," as we understand that term. It was a baptism which belonged to repentance, or which grew out of repentance. Only penitent people were to receive John's baptism. (Cf. Matt. 3: 8.) The people to whom John preached were already believers in God, but they were taught to believe on "him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus." (Acts 19: 4.) "Unto remission of sins" shows the design of repentance and baptism. Goodspeed's translation says, "John the baptizer appeared in the desert, and preached repentance and baptism in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins."

And there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. It should be noted that John's preaching was done in the wilderness, rather than in the thickly populated areas; but that in no way lessened the interest of the people; for they flocked to him in great numbers. The term "all," in the expression "And there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem," is not to be understood in the absolute sense of the word. We are told expressly in Luke 7: 29, 30 that some did not accept his baptism. "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers re-

jected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him." The term "confess" means to say the same thing. Jehovah, through John, had charged the people with sin; and when they confessed their sins, that is, admitted them, they were saying the same thing.

It should be observed that the identical conditions for the remission of sins, which were preached by John, are required by Christ now. Believers were required to repent and be baptized in order to get their sins forgiven; and that is what Peter taught. "Peter said to them, 'You must repent, and every one be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to have your sins forgiven.' " (Acts 2: 38, Goodspeed.) The people in John's day were not baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ," as people now must be; but the conditions are the same.

And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. The clothing and personal habits of John were ideally suited to his mission, especially since he was in the water so much. The coarse camel's hair garments and the leathern girdle or belt were inexpensive, and would withstand prolonged and difficult wear. His diet was simple and easy to obtain. The law of Moses permitted the eating of such locusts (Lev. 11: 22), and the country abounded in wild honey. (Cf. Ex. 3: 8; Deut. 32: 13; Judg. 14: 8.) Jesus spoke of the light diet of John (see Matt. 11: 18, 19), and it is possible that he meant by the expression "neither eating nor drinking" that he had no set time for his meals, and never ate very much. But one thing is certain, John made a tremendous impression upon the people of Judaea; and the results which followed his efforts were nothing short of amazing.

And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. The people at the time of our lesson wore sandals of wood or leather, and they were bound to the feet by straps of heavy cloth or leather. Servants were usually em-

ployed in unfastening these latches and bearing the shoes or sandals away; and what John was saying was this, "I am not worthy to be his servant." A more extensive account of John's tribute to the Lord's greatness and a description of his own unworthiness is found in John 3: 27-30, which should be read in this connection.

I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit. This statement must be understood in the light of John's contrast between Christ's greatness and his own unworthiness. John's baptizing in water was only a physical act which even a servant could do; but that which Christ would do would require the power of God to enable him to do it. (Read John 1: 29-34.) That which John did affected or had to do with the body, that is, the physical part of man; but Christ would deal with the spirit of man.

If one will take the time to read that which the Bible says regarding the *Personality* of the Holy Spirit, it will not take him long to see that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was not a literal performance. Many figurative expressions were used in connection with the work of Christ: so why should one be surprised if figurative language is also used with reference to the Holy Spirit and his mission? They are both persons—members of the Godhead, and both have a definite work to do in connection with the salvation of men and women. The Holy Spirit gave unusual powers to the apostles and others during the early days of the church, but when the days of miracles were over, near the close of the first century of the Christian era, that phase of the work ended. See 1 Cor. 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-13. The only literal baptism mentioned in the New Testament or given as a command is water baptism, (cf. Acts 10: 47, 48), and that is the baptism of the great commission.

The Turning Point in the Life of Christ

(Mark 1: 9-11)

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

the Jordan. It will be noted all through the Book of Mark that this writer is usually more specific in giving details. He, for example, is the only one of the writers who says that Jesus came "from Nazareth." That, as all Bible students know, was the home town of Jesus. The Lord was not persuaded by John that he should be baptized, but he left his home with that purpose in mind. God had commanded all his people to submit to John's baptism (cf. Luke 7: 30); and since Jesus was himself an Israelite, it was just as much his duty to be baptized of John, as it was that of his fellow Jews. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 15.) Jesus, of course, did not have to be baptized for the remission of sins; but it was necessary for him to obey the command of God. (Cf. Psalm 119: 172.)

And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: It should be observed that Mark says that Jesus, after his baptism, came "up out of the water," which implies that he went down into the water; and if he went down into the water, there is every reason for believing that he was immersed, that being the literal meaning of the word "baptize." Men have tried in every way possible to prove that Jesus was not immersed by John, but as long as we have the facts as they are recorded in the

gospel records, there can be no serious doubts as to what took place.

Luke (3: 21, 22), says that Jesus was praying when he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit "in a bodily form, as a dove," descending upon him. We learn from John 1: 29-34 that John also saw the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and abiding upon him; and it is possibly true that others saw the same thing. The purpose of this scene was clearly stated by John. "And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1: 33, 34.)

And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. Voices from heaven acknowledged Jesus at his birth, baptism, transfiguration, and near the close of his ministry (see John 12: 28). When God spoke on the occasion now before us, he gave expression to two thoughts, namely, (1) that Jesus was his Son, and (2) that he was pleased with him as he was about to enter upon the work for which he came to the earth. The baptism of Jesus marked the dividing line between his private life and his public ministry; and it is true now that no one can enter upon the work of a Christian before baptism. (Cf. Gal. 3: 26, 27.)

Questions for Discussion

What are we to study during this quarter?

What is the aim of these lessons?

What is the subject of the lesson for today?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Who wrote the Book of Mark?

What are some of the things which the New Testament says about Mark?

What special fitness did he have for writing such a record?

What possible internal evidence do we have regarding authorship?

How much time in the life of Christ is covered by Mark?

The Golden Text

What ideas are contained in this text?

What is repentance? and why was it enjoined upon the people by John?

What is the kingdom of heaven? and why is it so called?

What is meant by the expression "at hand"?

What does this prove regarding the establishment of the kingdom?

Mark's Beginning Point

What did Mark mean by saying "the beginning of the gospel"?

At what point in the life of Christ did Mark begin his record?

What prophetic utterances did he cite? and why?

Why did he mention only one of the prophets?

What were the points of emphasis in both the quotations?

The Mission of John

What shows that John fulfilled the prediction of Malachi?

When was baptism as we know it first introduced?

What was the burden of John's preaching? How was baptism the "baptism of repentance"?

What was the purpose of the baptism of repentance?
 What was the general reaction to John's preaching?
 Why did he preach in the wilderness rather than in the cities?
 In what sense is the term "all" used?
 What is implied in confessing one's sins?
 What are the conditions of forgiveness of sins—then and now?
 What is said regarding John's clothing and food?
 Why did he live that kind of life?
 What comment did Jesus make regarding John's diet?
 What did John say about the greatness of Jesus?
 How did John illustrate the difference between him and Jesus?
 How does the Personality of the Holy Spirit enter into this subject?
 What is the only literal baptism mentioned in the New Testament?

The Turning Point in the Life of Christ
 What is suggested by the fact that Jesus "came" to where John was?
 Why was it necessary for Jesus to be baptized?
 How did Jesus illustrate this truth?
 What does it mean to "fulfil all righteousness"?
 What evidence do we have that Jesus was immersed?
 Why would anyone want to prove that Jesus was not immersed?
 What happened after Jesus was baptized?
 What was the purpose in sending the Holy Spirit upon him?
 Why did God speak regarding Jesus? and what did he say?
 How was the private life of Jesus divided from his public life?
 What place does baptism have in our lives today?

Lesson II—January 10, 1960

MIRACLES OF HEALING

Lesson Text

Mark 1: 29-42

29 And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Si'-mon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 Now Si'-mon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her:

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

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

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

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

35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and

went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

36 And Si'-mon and they that were with him followed after him;

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

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

39 And he went into their synagogues throughout all Gal'-i-lee, preaching and casting out demons.

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And he healed many that were sick" (Mark 1: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 32: 17.

Daily Bible Readings

January	4. M.	Prayer and Healing (Mark 1: 29-35)
January	5. T.	Healing a Leper (Mark 1: 40-45)
January	6. W.	Palsied Man Healed (Matt. 9: 1-8)
January	7. T.	A Commission to Heal (Matt. 10: 1-8)
January	8. F.	God's Regard for the Body (Matt. 6: 25-34)

January 9. S.....Peter Heals. (Acts 9: 32-41)
 January 10. S.....Meeting Human Needs (Luke 9: 10-17)

Time.—A.D. 27.

Places.—Capernaum and throughout Galilee.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, some demons, and some afflicted people.

Introduction

The question of miracles fills a large part of the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. The question is a broad one, and space here does not permit anything like a thorough discussion of the subject. But a few observations should be made, since there is such a widespread misunderstanding of the reason for miracles. What we shall say is limited for the most part to those miracles which were performed in connection with the ministry of salvation. Moses the great type of Jesus was faced with a similar need for miracles when he undertook to lead the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. In the case of both Moses and Jesus, confidence in evil powers had to be destroyed before they could be successful in getting the people to follow them.

The subject of "demonology" was a commonly accepted doctrine in Palestine when Christ began his ministry; and that accounted for much of the illness among the people at that time. Satan, according to the belief of the people, had the power to send wicked spirits into individuals, and they more or less took possession of them. It is generally thought that God in some way and for some reason permitted this practice. It is not necessary for us to try to understand the whys and wherefores behind all of this; it is enough to know that such was the situation which confronted Jesus when he began his ministry which was designed to lead men from Satan unto God.

There are many people in the world today who have apparently failed to

see the purpose which was behind the miracles which Jesus performed and authorized to be performed. They were never intended as something essential to salvation, and the power to perform them was never a guarantee that one was pleasing to God. (Cf. Matt. 7: 21-23.) They were temporary and incidental; and their purpose was definite and limited. The power to work miracles was never widely held, but was always committed to a special few. (Cf. 1 Cor. 12: 4-11.) Mark 16: 17, 18 is often cited in support of the idea that miracles can be worked today by believers, but that is a mistaken use of the passage.

The original word for "accompany" in the passage just cited means, according to Thayer, "to be always present, to attend one wherever he goes." It is not necessary, of course, for every individual believer to have miraculous power for this to be true. *Living Oracles*, a translation of the New Testament, renders the passage in this way, "And these miraculous powers shall attend the believers . . ." The idea is simply this: The gospel would be preached wherever faithful believers were; and since it was God's will that the gospel message be confirmed (Cf. Heb. 2: 1-4; Mark 16: 19, 20), there would always be people available who had miraculous power and who could confirm the word of God. This, of course, was limited to the age of miracles; for when the word of God had been duly confirmed, there would be no further need for such signs. Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-16.

The Golden Text

Since the golden text is found in the lesson text, it will be considered in the body of the lesson.

The Text Explained

Cures in Capernaum (Mark 1: 29-34)

And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew,

with James and John. The word "straightway" is a favorite word with Mark, and it is found in his writing more than thirty-five times. It means *immediately* or *at once*. Jesus and

his disciples had just attended the synagogue service, where he preached and cast out a demon, with the result that "the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about." See Verses 21-28.

It will be remembered that three of the four men mentioned here had become disciples of Jesus sometime before this (John 1: 35-51), but there is no evidence that they followed him continuously. But as Jesus was now beginning his first great Galilean ministry, he called all four of the ones mentioned here to be his constant followers. (Luke 5: 1-11.) The two pair of brothers were partners in the fishing business, and they were no doubt often together in the home of Peter and Andrew. John (1: 44), says that Peter and Andrew lived in Bethsaida. This was either a suburb of Capernaum, or else the brothers had moved into the latter city; for verse 33 says that all the city, that is, Capernaum, was gathered together at the door of Simon and Andrew's home.

Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her: and he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. Those who make the claim that Peter was the first pope cannot prove that he was an unmarried man. This passage clearly proves that he was married, and 1 Cor. 9: 5 shows that he continued to be so for years after this. "Celibacy for the clergy" is wholly unauthorized by the Scriptures. Cf. Heb. 13: 4; Gen. 2: 18.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the incident involving Peter's mother-in-law, but only Luke calls her ailment a "great" fever. He was a physician. It is said that Galen, the father of medicine, divided fevers into little and great. The description of the healing is very graphic: Jesus went to the sufferer; took her by the hand; lifted her up; and the fever left her. Luke says that he "rebuked" the fever, and it left her. She experienced no weakness after the Lord cured her, but instead, she ministered unto them. This is certainly different from the so-called cures of our day.

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were

sick, and them that were possessed with demons. Luke says, "And when the sun was setting," etc. The cure of Peter's wife's mother was probably the first such miracle that the people of Capernaum had seen, and it was a signal for them to gather all the sick and suffering and bring them to the door of Simon's house, so that Jesus could extend his healing power to them too. The reason for waiting until the sun was setting was due to the fact that the sabbath ended then. (Cf. Lev. 23: 32.) The traditional interpretation of the sabbath law (John 5: 10), restrained the people from carrying the sick to Jesus before sunset, or the end of the sabbath.

As indicated in the introduction, many people in the days when the New Testament was in the making were possessed with demons. Mark tells that Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene. (Mark 16: 9.) Something of the manner in which these demons worked may be learned from Matt. 12: 43-45: "But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man cometh worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation."

The parable just quoted seems to imply that those in whom the demons took their abode were to some extent responsible for their presence. If the house had not been "empty, swept, and garnished," there would have been no room for the evil spirits. This is not to say that such people were entirely responsible for the presence of unclean spirits; for it appears that some rather helpless people, including children, were possessed with demons. Sometimes these spirits were dumb and otherwise afflicted; and these conditions were passed on to the people in whom they dwelt. Cf. Mark 9: 17ff; 5: 1-20.

And all the city was gathered together at the door. The one cure which Jesus had performed in Peter's house caused the entire city to come

unto him. This was because they understood and appreciated the meaning of physical health and well-being. If people could be made to feel the same way about spiritual health and well-being, both the well and the sick would be seeking for Jesus. It is a fact, capable of demonstration, that the closer one lives to Jesus the more interested he is in salvation, both his own and that of others.

And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him. Matthew says that the healing was done "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." (Matt. 8: 17.) Some translations speak of the demons as "devils," but this is not in keeping with the original. There is only one devil, and he is never designated by the term which is translated *demon*. McGarvey says that this word was applied by the Greeks to their inferior deities, some of whom were the offspring of the gods, and some the deified spirits of dead men. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 20; Acts 25: 19.) This is the manner in which the New Testament speaks of demons, that is, the New Testament is in agreement with this conception. Revelation does not give any information as to the manner in which demons gained possession of people, neither does it say when such began and ended. See McGarvey's *Commentary on Matthew*, p. 77, 78. The reason why Jesus did not permit the demons to speak when he cast them out was (1) he did not want the faith of the people to be associated with them, and (2) he did not want it to appear that he was on friendly relationship with them.

Prayer and Evangelism

(Mark 1: 35-39)

And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed. That which distinguishes a deeply religious man from all other people is the fact that he has a definite place in his life for prayer; or, to express the same thing in other words, prayer is a definite part of his life. No finer example of this truth can be found than the one

which Jesus left us. He prayed because he felt the need of his Father's help and companionship. When Jesus prayed he was communing with God, while surrendering himself unreservedly to all the emotions of divine love, both for the Father and for all mankind, so that he might better dedicate himself to the work which he had undertaken.

There is something touchingly illustrative of the Saviour's humanity in the passage now under consideration. He could have prayed upon his couch; but he did not. Instead, he sought a quiet place where he could be alone with his heavenly Father. And if the Lord needed to pray, how can we who profess to follow him live without communion with God? To begin the day with our heavenly Father is the only sure method of setting ourselves above all of its events, and thus being in a position to triumph over them with perfect mastery. (Cf. Heb. 4: 14-16.)

And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee. They that were with Simon when he sought Jesus were probably Andrew, James, and John. Luke says that the multitudes sought after him. The probability is that the disciples saw the multitude seeking for Jesus, and they went to tell him. The fact that Peter rushed into the privacy of the Lord's devotion reminds us of his impulsive nature. Luke further says that the multitudes would have stayed him, that he should not go from them.

And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth. And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons. Matthew gives a fuller account of this trip throughout Galilee: "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multi-

tudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judaea and from beyond the Jordan." (Matt. 4: 23-25.) Mark is usually more specific and mentions only one species of miracles, namely, "casting out demons."

Instead of staying in one place—Capernaum, Jesus sought to arouse the entire country of Galilee; and that which the disciples evidently regarded as a large work, was indeed small in comparison with the outlook of Jesus. People who understand that it is God's will that all people have an opportunity to hear the gospel will never be satisfied with a single effort, however great, in one place. (Cf. Mark 16: 15; Col. 1: 23.)

The "synagogues" of the Jews were their meeting places for their weekly worship. We are not told specifically just when the synagogue first came into use among the Jews, but it is thought by many that it was during the Babylonian captivity. The temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed, and the captives being deprived of the temple-worship, may have established synagogue-worship as a substitute. Synagogue-worship, however, was largely given to instruction and prayer, rather than to sacrifices which alone could be offered at the temple.

A Leper Cleansed

(Mark 1: 40-42)

And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Leprosy has been described as the most terrible disease known to man. The body of its victim disintegrates joint by joint, until the whole frame crumbles to pieces. It is thought by many Bible students that God chose leprosy as a symbol of sin and its consequences, and that the legislation which Moses gave regarding it was intended to represent this conception. "Being the most loathsome and incurable of all diseases, it fitly represents in bodily form the ravages of sin in the soul of a man."

The leprous man believed in the power of Jesus to grant his request, but he apparently had some misgiv-

ings regarding his willingness to expend his power on one so unclean and so unworthy. It was natural for the leper to feel that way toward Jesus; for in temporal things we can never be as sure of God's willingness, as we can be of his power. It is also noteworthy that the afflicted man asked for cleanliness rather than for health. The Jews looked upon uncleanliness with much more horror than they did upon the disease itself. For one to be unclean in their sight was to be an outcast from the people of God, and to be classed with swine, dogs, and other odious and abhorrent creatures. This awful condition is described in the Bible in these words:

"And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be." (Lev. 13: 45, 46.) But as terrible as this is, it is only a representation of the manner in which God regards sin.

And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. In this instance Mark, as he often does, emphasized the feelings of Jesus. The law of Moses forbade one's touching a leper or anything else which was unclean, on the penalty of being himself unclean. (Cf. Num. 5: 2; Lev. 11: 40.) But there is no indication that Jesus was considered unclean on this occasion. Rather, the touch of Jesus gave the leper a new conception of divine compassion. For a mere man to touch a leper would render him unclean, and would not benefit the afflicted man; but in the case of Jesus, his touch did benefit the afflicted man, and did not have any adverse effect upon him; and this relation is also seen in our human state: instead of his being defiled by our uncleanness, we are purified by his righteousness.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why is it important to study the subject of miracles?

Why were so many miracles performed during Bible times?

What is the teaching of the Scriptures regarding "demonology"?

What was the purpose behind the Lord's miracles?

What would the ability to work miracles today prove? Give reasons for your answer.

What does the New Testament teach regarding the end of miracle working?

Who performed the miracles of Mark 16: 17, 18?

Cures in Capernaum

What is the meaning of "straightway," and why did Mark use the term so often?

Where had Jesus and his disciples been just prior to this lesson?

How long had these disciples been the constant followers of Jesus?

Give the circumstances surrounding their call.

Where did Simon and Andrew live?

What situation confronted Jesus in the house?

Describe the manner in which Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.

What happened at sundown, and why wait until the sun was setting?

Cite some typical cases of people who were possessed of demons.

Were the victims in any way responsible for the presence of the demons? Give reasons for your answer.

Why did so many people come to Jesus on this occasion?

Why do not people feel toward sin as they do toward physical illness?

What reason is assigned for the Lord's healing ministry?

Why is it incorrect to speak of demons as "devils"?

Why didn't Jesus permit the demons to speak when he cast them out?

Prayer and Evangelism

Why is prayer so important in the lives of the Lord's people?

What is involved in praying?

Why did Jesus leave his couch and go to a solitary place to pray?

How should Christian people today feel about private prayers?

When Simon and his fellow disciples missed Jesus, what did they do?

How was Peter's impulsive nature indicated?

What did they say to Jesus when they found him? and why?

What was the Lord's reply to them and his reason for it?

Give a description of the tour of Jesus throughout Galilee.

What effect should the Lord's evangelistic journey have on his people now?

What were the "synagogues" of the Jews?

A Leper Cleansed

Why did the leper speak to Jesus as he did?

Give a description of a leper.

What use does the Bible make of the disease?

How did Jesus react to the leper's request?

Lesson III—January, 17, 1960

MINISTERING TO SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Lesson Text

Mark 2: 1-12

1 And when he entered again into Ca-per-na-um after some days, it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room *for them*, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them.

3 And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay.

5 And Je'-sus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one *even* God?

8 And straightway Je'-sus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?

10 But that they ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy),

11 I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

12 And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Golden Text.—“*Son, thy sins are forgiven*” (Mark 2: 5.)

Devotional Reading.—Isa. 61: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

January 11. M.....	Healing All Manner of Disease (Matt. 4: 23-25)
January 12. T.....	Healing Proof of Christ's Mission (Luke 7: 18-23)
January 13. W.....	An Example of Healing (Luke 7: 2-10)
January 14. T.....	Another Example of Healing (John 9: 1-12)
January 15. F.....	Signs to Accompany (Mark 16: 14-20)
January 16. S.....	Laying on of Hands (Acts 8: 14-24)
January 17. S.....	Prayer of Faith (James 5: 13-18)

Time.—A.D. 27, or 28.

Place.—Capernaum.

Persons.—Jesus, a palsied man, his friends, the people, and some scribes.

Introduction

The primary purpose for which Jesus came to the earth was not to minister to the physical needs of men, but rather to the spiritual. But it is sometimes necessary to give attention to the physical, before we are prepared to appreciate that which is done for our spiritual welfare. This appears to have been the way that Jesus approached the matter in his day; and if one will carefully consider the New Testament record, he will see that that was the plan followed by the early church.

Peter gives a brief summary of the personal ministry of Jesus in his address in the house of Cornelius in these words: “The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) — that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about do-

ing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” (Acts 10: 36-38.)

The Lord's people today are charged with the responsibility of administering to the needy, that is, those who are in need of the material things of life. “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 faith.” (Gal. 6: 10.) But anyone can see from the great commission which Christ gave to his disciples that their primary aim in life is to make disciples of all men. “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, 20.) This is in keeping with the primary mission of Jesus here among men. (Cf. Luke 19: 10.)

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is contained in the lesson text, and will be considered in its regular order.

The Text Explained

More Opportunities in Capernaum

(Mark 2: 1-4)

And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house. This statement must be understood in the light of the preceding paragraph which tells of the healing of the leper and the Lord's charge to him following his cleansing. “And he strictly

charged him, and straightway sent him out, and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly

enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter." (Mark 1: 43-45.)

Jesus had evidently remained away from the city long enough for the great excitement among the people to subside somewhat; and when he did return, it appears that he came more or less in secret. This is suggested by the expression "it was *noised* that he was in the house." The marginal note says, "At home." The house may have been the home of Peter and Andrew, where he had healed Peter's wife's mother, and had cured all the others who were brought there as the sun was setting. Matthew says that "he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city." (Matt. 9: 1.)

And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them. Luke, who does not identify the place as Capernaum, tells something about the character of the audience. "And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judaea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with him to heal." (Luke 5: 17.) Although the crowd filled the house and overflowed out into the court, it appears that the people were orderly and were ready to listen to his teaching.

And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. It is fair to assume that the men who brought the afflicted man to Jesus were deeply interested in his being made whole again; and they were willing to make the necessary effort to get him into the presence of Jesus. They had already seen enough to enable them to believe that he could restore him to health. These are the facts as they are set forth in the lesson now before us; but the narrative is also rich in suggestions as it respects the spiritual man. The bringing of the palsied man to Jesus is a fine illustration of the manner in which sinners may be brought to Christ for the purpose of salvation.

The principle herein illustrated must always be kept before God's

people, if the world is to be brought to the cross. The transformation of the human race can never be accomplished by any wholesale method. One by one the sin-sick are brought to Christ by those who are aware of his healing power. A house is not built by magic, but by laying one stone at a time; and in a similar manner the church, which is the house of God, is made to grow. (Cf. 1 Pet. 2: 5, 9; Acts 2: 47.) Every Christian should be a soul-winner for Jesus.

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay. The marginal reading for "bed" is *pallet*. It is necessary to understand the customs of those times in order to grasp the meaning of a passage which is couched in Oriental language. In the East bedsteads, such as we use, were practically unknown. The beds in common use at the time of this lesson were thin mattresses, or pallets, especially among the poor. So, in carrying the bed on which the palsied man was lying, the four men simply took hold of its corners, lifted it up, and walked away to the house where Jesus was.

Barnes says that the houses of the Orientals were built in a rectangular fashion, with a single entrance (door) from the street. This entrance led through an inclosure called a porch into an open area or court, around which the entire structure was built. It appears that Jesus was in this open court. The roof of these houses was usually flat, and this one, according to Luke, was covered with tiles. (See Luke 5: 19.) We are told that peasants often broke open the roof in order to let down articles too large to get through the door. We are further told that a stairway was placed in the porch by which one could easily reach the roof, where the occupants often sat in the cool of the evening, or slept during hot weather. They also sometimes afforded accommodations for meditation and prayer when one wished to be alone. (Cf. Acts 10: 9.) Luke says that they "let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus." The "midst" was the

open court around which the house was built.

We have already observed that the text says that they could not go to Jesus because of the crowd, that is, the crowd stood between them and Jesus. This, of course, was a literal fact, but it also suggests a valuable lesson for us today, namely, *the crowds which stand between*. There are many things today which keep people away from Christ, such as preconceived ideas, duties which they consider more important, interests, amusements, and very often friends. But if those who see these crowds will only stop and try to visualize what Jesus can mean to them, they, like the four friends of the paralytic, will find a way to overcome them. (Cf. John 7: 17.)

Healing and Forgiveness

(Mark 2: 5-9)

And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son thy sins are forgiven. Jesus was able to see the faith of the four friends of the afflicted man by that which they were doing; and that is the only way by which anyone can show forth his faith. "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? 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? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. 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." (James 2: 14-18.)

The affectionate manner in which Jesus addressed the afflicted man, calling him "Son," might have, under ordinary conditions, surprised the scribes who were sitting there, since they usually held themselves aloof from sinners; but if there was any surprises in the address now under consideration, it was quickly swallowed up in the greater surprise in hearing Jesus tell the paralytic that his sins were forgiven. That power, so far as they were concerned, had never been vouchsafed to man, but it was God's alone. Man had often

been authorized to name the conditions of forgiveness, but only God could actually forgive one's sins.

But there were certain scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God? The "scribes" were the scholars or experts in the law of Moses. Luke calls them "doctors of the law," that is, "teachers of the law"; for that is the literal meaning of the expression. See Luke 5: 17; cf. 1 Tim. 1: 7 where the same original word is used. These men were also called "lawyers," that is, legal experts. (Cf. Luke 11: 45, 46, 52.) The scribes were generally unfriendly to Jesus, and were probably present on the occasion of our lesson for the purpose of finding something which he would say or do to use against him. (Cf. Mark 12: 13.)

The term "blaspheme," as used in this lesson, means to arrogate to one's self that which belonged exclusively to God, or to claim an attribute which is God's alone. Jesus would have been guilty of the charge which was made against him, if he had not been the Son of God. The scribes were not in error in their reasoning or logic, but were mistaken in their premises. It was for this reason that Jesus did not deny their reasoning; he simply corrected their mistaken application of it to himself.

And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? There are several lessons which we should learn from this passage. (1) The Lord knows our very thoughts. "For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4: 12, 13.)

(2) The *heart* mentioned here is not the physical heart; for it thinks

(Matt. 9: 4); reasons (Mark 2: 8); understands (Matt. 13: 15); believes (Rom. 10: 10); loves (Matt. 22: 37); purposes (2 Cor. 9: 7); condemns and approves (1 John 3: 10-21). The heart, as these passages show, performs the functions of the intellect, affections, will, and conscience. (3) We should learn the significance of "Why"? and repeat the term often, and then endeavor to give an honest answer. Such a practice would have a profound effect on our characters and lives.

In replying to the scribes, Jesus, as he often did, presented a dilemma from which his critics were unable to extricate themselves. He proposed a miracle in the physical realm in order to prove his authority in the spiritual realm, and thereby illustrated one of the reasons why he did so many wonderful works. It was as easy for one who possesses the attributes of God to say the one as it was the other; for they amounted to one and the same thing, namely, the exercise of sovereign authority and power.

The Authority of Christ Demonstrated (Mark 2: 10-12)

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. The title "the Son of man" was a favorite with Jesus, and the scribes would readily recognize it as a designation which was prophetically given to the Messiah. (See Dan. 7: 13; cf. Matt. 26: 64; Mark 14: 62.) Christ in assuming this title identified himself with the human race, and gave hope of a new life to mankind. The following quotation seems to give the significance of the statement which Jesus made in the passage now before us.

"To understand this sentence we should place the emphasis upon the word 'say,' because the question at issue was the power or effect of his speech. The rabbis, after their first shock of surprise, thought that Jesus feared to attempt the fraud of a so-called miracle in the presence of learned men, lest he should be detected and exposed: and hence looked

upon his present action as an attempt to bear himself safely off before the public, and to maintain his standing by the use of high-sounding words. They felt that he used words of unseen effect, because he dared not use those of seen effect. This was precisely the view that Jesus knew they would take, and that he wished them to take; for by showing his ability to work in the realms of sight that which is impossible; viz.: the healing of the sick man, he could place before them proof suited to their own reasoning that he had a like ability to work the impossible in the realms of the unseen; viz.: the forgiveness of the man's sins. By thus demonstrating his authority in the external and physical world, Jesus assures us of his dominion over the internal and spiritual." (*The Fourfold Gospel*, p. 187.)

It seems that the Jewish rabbis held that no diseased person could be healed of his infirmity until his sins were forgiven; and it is possible that Jesus framed his reply to the scribes with this thought in mind. It should be kept in mind that the power to perform miracles did not necessarily mean that such a person could forgive sins; for many human beings had been granted that power. But when a person claimed to be able to forgive sins and then worked a miracle to prove his claim, that would be sufficient proof that he could do as he professed. Thus Jesus said in effect, In order that you may know that I have the power to forgive sins, I am going to perform an act which you must admit requires the power of God; and since God would not give such power to an imposter, the only conclusion which you can reach is that I do have the power on earth to forgive sins.

And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. In view of the general attitude which the scribes and Pharisees manifested toward Jesus, it is improbable that they joined in the general rejoicing and the glorifying of God when they saw that which Jesus did. To "glorify" God means to praise him. Instead of "amazed," Matthew says that they were *afraid*. Luke gives the

fullest account of the effect which the occurrence produced: "And amazement took hold on all, and they

glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day."

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What was the primary purpose of Christ's coming to the earth?
Why did he perform miracles? Think, and discuss fully?
How did Peter summarize the Lord's mission among men?
Discuss fully the mission of the Lord's people today.

More Opportunities in Capernaum

Why did Jesus leave Capernaum while the interest was so great?
How did the people learn that he had returned to the city?
What did the people do after hearing that he was there?
Tell something of the character of the audience which assembled.
What happened during the Lord's preaching to create more interest?
What lesson should we learn from this about bringing people to Christ?
What is our responsibility in this respect?
How is the house of the Lord to be increased?
How did the four men get the paralytic to Jesus?

On what kind of bed was he lying?
Give a description of an Oriental house, such as the one of this lesson.
What use was frequently made of the roof of such houses?
What are some of the "crowds" which stand between people and Christ today?
How may such obstacles be overcome?

Healing and Forgiveness

How was Jesus able to see the faith of the men who brought the afflicted man to him?
How do people show their faith today?
What did Jesus say to the paralytic? and why?

What effect did this have upon the scribes who were there?
Who were the scribes? and by what other names were they known?
What is the meaning of the term "blasphemy" as used in this lesson?
How did Jesus regard the reasoning of the scribes concerning him?
What reply did he make to them?
What are some of the lessons which are suggested by this passage?
Why did Jesus place the scribes in a dilemma?
Why was it as easy to say the one as it was the other?

The Authority of Christ Demonstrated

What is the difference between "power" and "authority"?
Why did Jesus speak of himself as "the Son of man"?
How did Jesus demonstrate his authority?
How did the rabbis probably feel toward him?
How was the Lord's action a reply to his critics?
What relation did the Jewish leaders see between sin and disease?
How did the Lord's action fit into this concept?
Does the power to perform a miracle mean that such a person has the authority to forgive sins? Give reasons for your answer.
Could the apostles forgive sins? (See John 20: 21-23.)
What is the difference between forgiving sins and announcing the conditions upon which the Lord will forgive sins?
What effect did the Lord's demonstration of his authority to forgive sins have on the multitude?
Give the significance of "amazed," "afraid," and "glorify."
How did the scribes probably feel toward Jesus? Why?

Lesson IV—January 24, 1960

JESUS STILLS THE SEA

Lesson Text

Mark 4: 35-41

35 And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side.

36 And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him.

37 And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling.

38 And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion: and they

awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”* (Mark 4: 41.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Isa. 12: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

January 18. M.....	Christ's Power (Eph. 1: 15-23)
January 19. T.....	Jesus' Power to Forgive (Luke 7: 36-50)
January 20. W.....	Demon Cast Out (Mark 5: 10-20)
January 21. T.....	Feeding the Hungry (Mark 6: 30-44)
January 22. F.....	God Desire Hungry Fed (Isa. 58: 1-9)
January 23. S.....	Bread for the Hungry Soul (John 6: 41-51)
January 24. S.....	Purpose of Miracles (John 20: 30,31)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

Those studying this lesson should be familiar with the entire chapter from which the lesson text is taken, that is, the fourth chapter of Mark. Jesus was at the lake or sea of Galilee, and as he began to teach the multitudes who had gathered there, he entered into a boat and sat and taught them. This was to give him more freedom and to avoid the people's crowding too closely upon him. And, too, they probably could see him better. This occasion reminds us of a similar one, recorded in Luke 5: "Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret [another name for the lake of Galilee]; and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat."

The teaching which Jesus did on this occasion was in the form of parables. He had spoken parables before, but this appears to be the first time that he linked a group of them together so as to make a discourse. Most Bible readers readily recognize the Sermon on the Mount as being an address which Jesus delivered, but comparatively few seemingly are aware that there are several discourses by Jesus in the gospel records, one of them being the one made up of parables.

The lesson which we are to consider today is based upon an incident which took place just after Jesus had finished speaking the parables already referred to. Mark concludes the work on that occasion with these words: "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it; and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things." It was at this time that the lesson of the text begins.

The Golden Text

This part of the lesson will be considered in its regular order in the lesson text.

The Text Explained

When Day Is Done

(Mark 4: 35, 36)

And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side. Jesus apparently was in the vicinity of Capernaum when he spoke the parables which preceded their voyage across the lake to the more thinly settled

district on the eastern side. While the mere order of events in the various records of the Lord's ministry is obviously not important, since it is evident that the writers did not intend to give a chronological history of the life of Christ; but this is probably a good place to call attention to the fact that the events which are

recorded are not always given in the order of their occurrence. Mark places the stilling of the storm soon after the Lord had concluded his discourse of parables, while Matthew gives that miracle along with others in the eighth chapter of his record, and the parables in the thirteenth chapter. Matthew introduces the stilling of the storm in connection with a conversation which he had with a scribe and one of his disciples about following him (8: 18-27), a conversation which Mark omits altogether, and which Luke records in an entirely different situation. (See Luke 9: 51-62.) The purpose of the gospel writers was to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and not to give a detailed account of his life as he lived it day by day. They could and did therefore select events and sayings here and there, and use them to prove whatever point they had under consideration.

We learn from Mark 5: 1 that "they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes." The lake of Galilee, like lake Huleh, a few miles to the north, is but an expansion of the river Jordan. McGarvey describes the sea of Galilee as being six miles wide at its widest part, and twelve and one half miles long. The shape of the lake resembles that of a pear, with the stem-end at the south and turned a little to one side. The lake is about 682 feet below sea level, and its greatest depth is around two hundred feet, or probably a little less. Time may change these figures somewhat. When McGarvey visited there he said that the lake still "abounds in fish, as it did of old, but the fleet of boats which once dotted its surface with their white sails is now reduced to three, and even these find only partial employment in supplying the market of Tiberias, the only town now left on shores which once were packed with a dense and busy population."

And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. Since the great crowd of people on the shore no doubt remained until Jesus left, it is improbable that Jesus and his disciples went ashore before their departure. Nothing is said about any supplies for the journey, although it is possible, of

course, that they already had them in the boat before the Lord began to deliver his message. The other boats which were with him were probably those which had gathered about him, so as to hear that which he was saying. Nothing is said about whether or not they started with him across the sea, or what became of them during the storm, if they did.

A Storm at Sea

(Mark 4: 37-39)

And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling. As already pointed out, the surface of the lake was 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, some thirty miles to the west. The lake is also surrounded by hills and steep cliffs from three hundred to a thousand feet high. The water-courses on the banks had cut out deep ravines which acted like great funnels in drawing down the cold winds from the mountains to the warm waters on the surface of the lake, with the result that storms were often both sudden and severe. William M. Thomson says that "such winds are not only violent, but they come down suddenly, and often when the sky is perfectly clear. I once went in to swim near the hot baths; and, before I was aware, a wind came rushing over the cliffs with such force that it was with difficulty I could regain the shore." With the surface of the lake a boiling cauldron and lashed into a mighty fury, the waves would roll into the boat faster than the water could be bailed out. This was often the fate of the light fishing craft which plied the waters of this turbulent lake.

And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion: and they awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish? The minuteness of Mark's description is noteworthy. McGarvey observes that with a master-hand he selects those touches in the details of his picture which impart the liveliest conception of the entire scene. The cushion was probably a seat-cover, and may have been, as has been suggested, "a sheepskin with the fleece, which, when rolled up, served as a pillow." The stern, that is, the hinder part of the boat, was the most commodious place

for passengers. The fact that Jesus was asleep shows the calm repose which he could maintain while the tempest was raging and the boat was filling with water.

It appears that the disciples did not awake Jesus when the storm first broke upon them. They probably had consideration for his weariness, and sought to let him sleep as long as they felt that they were in no immediate danger. Solomon says that "the sleep of a laboring man is sweet" (Eccles. 5: 12a); and inasmuch as Jesus had been engaged in strenuous labor that day, they did not want to disturb him. But when they felt that both they and he were in grave danger of being lost, they felt that they must cry to him for help. Reading the accounts of Matthew and Mark together, we hear the disciples saying, "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish? Save, Lord; we perish." Strangely forgetful that he was in the same great danger as they, as McGarvey notes, they looked upon his peaceful slumber as indicating that he was indifferent toward it.

And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. A cry for help never falls in vain on the Saviour's ear. The storm may rage around him, and the elements clash about his head, but his slumber is undisturbed; but let one of his disciples cry unto him for help, and he is instantly awake and ready to save. There would have been some excuse for the terror of the disciples, if Jesus had not been in the boat with them; but with Jesus there it could only mean that they were weak in faith. They had already seen enough during the time that they had been with Jesus to convince a thoughtful person that Jesus had power over the forces of nature. But they, like many of us today, and like Peter did at another time, had their minds on the wind and the waves, rather than on Jesus. (Cf. Matt. 14: 22-33.)

When Jesus spoke to the wind and the sea, he personified them in order to give emphasis to his authority over them. The "great calm" demonstrated that the miracle was complete; for the waves of such a body of water continue to roll long after the winds have ceased to blow.

A Question about Faith

(Mark 4: 40, 41)

And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith? The fact that the disciples appealed to Jesus for help shows that they had some faith in him; but it was not sufficient to save them from their awful fear. Luke says that Jesus asked them, "Where is your faith?" while, according to Matthew, he asked, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" It should be observed that "fear" and "faith" are placed in diametric opposition to each other; they both cannot characterize a person at the same time. "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4: 18.) If the term "faith" were substituted in this passage for "love," the same thing could be said of the former in contrast with fear. Perfect faith does indeed cast out fear.

It is both interesting and helpful to note that Jesus did not deal with his disciples on the basis of that which they should have been, but rather as they were then. He adapted himself to the weakness of human faith, and so performed such a great variety of miracles that even the weakest disciple has no room to doubt that with Jesus all things are possible. We cannot, of course, be with Jesus in a boat during a great storm on the sea of Galilee as those disciples were, but we can be situated where faith on our part is needed just as much as it was in their case: and the question is, Do we have such faith? Do we trust Jesus to save us under any and all circumstances while we are doing that which he commands us to do? "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.) This is to say that no Christian will ever be placed in any circumstance where it is impossible for him to escape, if he is with the Lord.

And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? The "fear" which the disciples

felt for the storm was a timid or cowardly attitude, while their fear for Jesus was one of reverence and awe. They realized that their Teacher was more than a man, and that realization aroused in them a feeling of reverence, veneration, and godly fear. Albert Barnes, in commenting on the reaction of the disciples, says,

"Jesus spake to the winds; rebuked their raging, and the sea was suddenly calm. The storm subsided; the ship glided smoothly; danger fled; and in amazement they stood in the presence of him who controlled the tempests that God had raised; and they felt that *he* must be God himself, for none but God could calm the heaving billows and scatter the tempest. No scene could have been more grand than this display of the power of Jesus. The darkness; the dashing waves; the howling winds; the heaving and tossing ship; the fears and cries of the seamen, all by a single word hushed into calm repose, present an image of power and divinity irresistibly grand and awful. So the tempest rolls and thickens over the head of the awakened sinner. So he trembles over immediate and awful destruction. So, while the storm of wrath howls, and hell threatens to engulf him, he comes trembling to the Saviour. He hears; he rebukes the storm, and the sinner is safe. An indescribable peace takes possession of the soul, and he glides on a tranquil sea to the haven of eternal rest."

There is, of course, more for the sinner to do than to come trembling to the Saviour. "The demons also believe, and shudder." The New Testament presents a picture of a man who came trembling before God's messengers: "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and everyone's bands were loosed. And the jailor, being roused

out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, 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 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 rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God." (Acts 16: 23-34.) This is an inspired definition of the meaning of "believe."

Master, the tempest is raging!
The billows are tossing high!

The sky is o'er-shadowed with blackness,
No shelter or help is nigh;

Carest thou not that we perish? How
canst thou lie asleep,

When each moment so madly is
threat'ning a grave in the angry
deep?

Master, with anguish of spirit I bow
in my grief today;

The depths of my sad heart are troubled;
O waken and save, I pray!

Torrents of sin and of anguish sweep
o'er my sinking soul!

And I perish! I perish, dear Master;
O hasten, and take control!

Master, the terror is over, the elements
sweetly rest;

Earth's sun in the calm lake is mirrored,
and heaven's within my
breast.

Linger, O blessed Redeemer, leave
me alone no more;

And with joy I shall make the blest
harbor, and rest on the blissful
shore.

The wind and the waves shall obey
thy will, Peace, be still!

Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed
sea, or demons, or men, or
whatever it be,

No water can swallow the ship where
 lies the Master of ocean and earth
 and skies;
 They all shall sweetly obey thy will,

Peace, be still! Peace, be still!
 They all shall sweetly obey thy will,
 Peace, peace, be still!

—Mary A. Baker.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why is it important to read the entire fourth chapter of Mark?
 Give a summary of the chapter preceding the lesson text.
 Why would Jesus get into a boat to teach?
 Describe a similar situation when he taught from a boat.
 What was the nature of the Lord's teaching on the occasion of our lesson for today?
 How many addressees which Jesus delivered can you find?
 Name three of his longest sermons.
 When did the events of this lesson take place?

When Day Is Done

Where was Jesus when he suggested that they cross the lake?
 Give the setting of the voyage across the lake as given by the first three gospel writers.
 Why didn't they all list the events in the life of Christ chronologically?
 What was the principal purpose before each writer?
 To what place were Jesus and his disciples going when they left Capernaum?
 Give a brief description of the lake of Galilee.
 When did Jesus and the disciples leave the multitudes?

A Storm at Sea

Why was it so easy for storms to strike the sea of Galilee?
 Give a description of such a storm as we are considering today.
 What points did Mark set down in his

record which emphasize the minuteness of his narrative?
 Why was Jesus asleep? and why on a cushion in the stern of the ship?
 When did the disciples awake him?
 Why didn't they call to him sooner?
 What did they say to him when they awoke him? Why?
 What did Jesus do when he arose?
 Were the disciples justified in being afraid?
 Why were they filled with fear?
 Why did Jesus personify the wind and the sea?

A Question about Faith

Did the disciples have any faith at all?
 Give reasons for your answer.
 How are "fear" and "faith" related in this lesson?
 Why can't one entertain fear and faith at the same time?
 Why didn't Jesus deal with his disciples on the basis of what they should have been, instead of as they were?
 What application does this lesson have for us today?
 Are we ever justified in being afraid?
 Give reasons for your answer.
 What was the difference between their fear of the storm and their fear of Jesus?
 Why did the disciples react to Jesus as they did?
 What are trembling sinners expected to do in order to be saved?
 Why is it impossible for one to be saved by faith alone?
 What is the inspired definition of "believe"?
 How does the poem, "Peace, Be Still," illustrate the lesson for today.
 Analyze each stanza of the song, and show the truth which is taught.
 Why can truth be taught so effective by song? (Cf. Col. 3: 16.)

Lesson V—January 31, 1960

LIFE FROM THE DEAD

Lesson Text

Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43

21 And when Je'-sus had crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him; and he was by the sea.

22 And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Ja-i'-rus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet,

23 And beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: *I pray thee*, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live.

24 And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.

35 While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Teacher any further?

36 But Je'-sus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to fol-

low with him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue; and he beholdeth a tumult, and *many* weeping and wailing greatly.

39 And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth.

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But he, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him,

and goeth in where the child was.

41 And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Tal'-'i-tha cu'-mi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad*” (Psalm 126: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 116: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

January 25. M.....	Deliverance from Death (Psalm 116: 1-9)
January 26. T.....	Jesus Gives Life (Mark 5: 35-43)
January 27. W.....	God the Source of Good (Psalm 103: 1-11)
January 28. T.....	A Petition for Help (Matt. 15: 21-28)
January 29. F.....	Assurance of Help (Matt. 7: 7-11)
January 30. S.....	The Resurrection (1 Cor. 15)
January 31. S.....	Divine Assurance (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Probably Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, three disciples, Jairus, and his daughter.

Introduction

It was pointed out in a previous lesson that Jesus was engaged in his first great Galilean ministry when the group of miracles which we are studying were performed. His fame was so great that he frequently had to get away from the multitudes, and more or less hide himself from them. This was not because Jesus was not interested in their welfare, but because they would make it impossible for him to accomplish the work which he had been sent to do. His sole mission was not to work miracles, but to make known the will of God.

Miracles were essential in order to establish the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, that is, to establish the fact in the minds of the people who were living then; and many of the things which he did have been recorded so that people in all succeeding generations might also believe. John says, “Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the

Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.” (John 20: 30, 31.)

The fact that divine power attended the word of Jesus was proof that he was speaking by divine authority; for it is certain that God would not grant such power to an imposter. “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.” (John 3: 1, 2.) The miracle which is before us today was one in a series which Jesus performed in order to show that all things which were related to man—the diseases of the flesh, the dangers of land and sea, the dominion of demons, and even death itself—are under the control of Jesus, and are controlled for the good of mankind. This was a clear demonstration of the benevolent purpose of his mission to the earth, and also of its divine origin.

The Golden Text

"Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad This golden text is taken from a psalm which belonged to a group which was known as "Songs of Assents." (See Psalms 120-134.) It is thought that these psalms were chanted by the pilgrims as they "went up" to Jerusalem for the annual feasts of the Jews, as authorized by Moses, or possibly sung by them on one of the stairways in or near the temple. The theme of the one from which this text is taken is thanksgiving for the return from Babylonian captivity. The entire psalm is as follows:

"When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion, We were like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing: Then said they among the nations, Jehovah hath done great things for them. Jehovah hath done great things for us, Whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Jehovah, As the streams in the South. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for

sowing, Shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him." It should be noted that it was "they among the nations" who said, "Jehovah hath done great things for them"; and then the Lord's people, as if in response, repeated, "Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad," thus making it personal and expressing their gratitude.

This was the sentiment of the people of Jesus' day, and it should be the sentiment of all of us now. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1: 17.) There is no way to measure the greatness of the joy and thanksgiving which were felt and expressed by the people who saw and were benefited by the miracles of mercy which were performed by Jesus. But that was only for this life: what should be our attitude toward the Lord for his wonderful mercy toward us, as it respects our salvation here and the promise of a home in heaven!

The Text Explained

A Father's Request

(Mark 5: 21-24)

And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him; and he was by the sea. After Jesus and his disciples disembarked from the ship following the storm at sea, they were met by a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit or a demon. This was in the land of the Gerasenes, east of the lake of Galilee. As Jesus was casting the demon out of the man, he asked him his name, and he said, "My name is Legion; for we are many." After coming out of the man, these demons were allowed to enter into a herd of swine, two thousand in number, feeding upon the mountain; and they rushed down the steep into the sea, and were drowned. This great destruction of livestock caused the people to request Jesus to leave their borders, which he did; and, taking a boat, he and his disciples returned to the northwestern shore of the sea to Capernaum. It was there that another great crowd met Jesus.

Taking into account the chronological order of the life of Jesus, as it is reconstructed from the records of the gospel narrators, it appears that Matthew's feast and the Lord's discourse on fasting took place at this time. (See Matt. 9: 10-17; Mark 2: 15-22; Luke 5: 29-39.) Matthew says that "while he spake these things [that is, the things just referred to] unto them, behold, there came a ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." (Matt. 9: 18.) Mark, having already mentioned these things in a previous section of his narrative, omits them here and comes immediately to the case of the synagogue ruler.

And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet, and beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: I pray thee, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live. The synagogues were places where the

Jews assembled for their weekly worship and probably daily instruction, especially for the children. It appears that each synagogue had one or more men in it who had the rule over it. (Cf. Acts 18: 8, 17; 13: 15.) The duty of these officials, according to Arndt and Gingrich, was "to take care of the physical arrangements for the worship services." Thayer, in describing this office, says, "It was his duty to select the readers or teachers in the synagogue, to examine the discourses of the public speakers, and to see that all things were done with decency and in accordance with ancestral usage."

Both Mark and Luke give the name of this ruler—Jairus. Mark's reference to his falling before Jesus explains Matthew's statement that he worshipped him. This was an act of homage; and although it was a lowly act for a ruler of a synagogue in the presence of Jesus, it was natural; for the ruler of the synagogue was in great distress, and such a condition often brings one to his knees. Luke tells us that the child was the ruler's only daughter, a fact which could be implied from the affectionate diminutive of Mark—"My little daughter."

The ruler's attitude toward Jesus was one of faith. Whether he would have humbled himself at the feet of Jesus if his little daughter had not been so near death, or even dead, no one knows. Many people forget God when the family is well, money in the bank, and times prosperous. This is to say that when we have the most to be thankful for we are prone to forget him. This is another reason why we should thank God for the troubles which bring us closer to him and make us dependent upon him for the blessing we so desperately need. (Cf. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

It is also worthy of note that the general character of Jesus is such that people turn to him when trouble strikes them. Isaiah prophesied of him, saying, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." (See Matt. 8: 17; cf. Isa. 53: 4.) Jesus wants the suffering to come to him, and he wants his people to conduct themselves in such a way that the troubled will not hesitate to come to him.

And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they

thronged him. As Jesus started with Jairus to his house, the crowd followed after him. Some no doubt were deeply interested, some only curious, while others were doubtless critical. But they all followed Jesus toward Jairus' house; for they wanted to see what he would do in this instance.

It is well to read the paragraph regarding the woman who was healed on the way to the house. In both cases, that of Jairus and the woman, faith was involved. Jairus' faith in the healing power of Jesus was somewhat tremulous; his knowledge of the Healer was imperfect. He must have his *presence* and a *touch*. The woman, on the other hand, was inferior to Jairus in knowledge and prestige, but she was superior to him in faith. She said, "If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole." When her identity had been made known, she came and fell down before Jesus, and told him all the truth. "And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

The Trial of Faith

(Mark 5: 35, 36)

While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Teacher any further? The slight delay which was caused by pausing to heal the woman who had touched the Lord's garments no doubt sorely tried the ruler's patience; and the sad news which came to him before they reached the house must have severely tested his faith; but it is noteworthy that no indication of murmuring or bitterness was manifested by him. The messengers, however, did show their great despair by asking, "Why troublest thou the Teacher any further?"

But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe. This remark by Jesus emphasizes the antagonism between faith and fear, and shows his interest in strengthening the faith of a believer. When Jesus said to the ruler, "Fear not, only believe," he was not emphasizing "faith only" as a means of obtaining the blessing; for he had already done all that he knew to do, all any human being could do. There

was nothing else for him to do, except to continue in the faith which he had already put in Jesus; and that was what Jesus told him to do.

Power over Death
(Mark 5: 37-43)

And he suffered no man to follow with him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. These three disciples were honored in this manner on two other occasions, that is, they alone of the followers of Jesus were permitted to go where Jesus went. The other two occasions were his transfiguration and his agony in the garden of Gethsemane. These three disciples have been called the members of the inner circle.

It is not clear as to where Jesus was when he forbade others to follow him. Some think that the meaning is that he did not permit them to follow him into the house. Ederseheim, in commenting on this, says, "How Jesus dismissed the multitude, or else kept them at bay, or where he parted from all his disciples except Peter, James, and John, does not clearly appear, and indeed, is of no importance. He may have left the nine apostles with the people, or outside the house, or parted from them in the courtyard of Jairus' house before he entered the inner apartments." The next verse of the text seems to imply that the separation from all but Peter, James, and John took place *before* "they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue."

And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue; and he beholdeth a tumult, and many weeping and wailing greatly. In addition to the outward manifestations of the grief of the immediate household when death invaded a house, professional mourners were hired to give expression to the solemnity of the occasion. (Cf. Amos 5: 16; 2 Chron. 35: 25; Jer. 9: 17, 18.) Barnes notes that to all this they add soft and melancholy music, and employ minstrels to aid their grief and to increase the expression of their sorrow. This violent manifestation of grief continued for several days, depending upon the station of the departed.

And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed

him to scorn. The noisy uproar and frantic demonstrations of sorrow, by the real and hired mourners, and the mingling of the plaintive strains of their instruments, which was now filling the house, was not suited to the calm and solemn act which Jesus was about to perform. His remark about the child's being asleep, rather than dead, was made in view of that which he expected to do, namely, make her death only a temporary sleep. (Cf. John 11: 11-14.) And, too, it is possible that what Jesus said was intended to counteract the teaching of the Sadducees who contended that when one died he ceased to exist.

The mourners, of course, knew that the girl was dead, as that term is commonly understood; and it was for that reason that they ridiculed him. This attitude on their part would make it impossible for them to deny the reality of the miracle. It is sometimes a good idea to get the opposition to take a pronounced stand on a proposition before the truth is revealed; for, having done that, they are forced into a position of contradiction to the truth, and are "hard-put" to deny it.

But he, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him, and goeth in where the child was. The reference here is to those who were making the tumult, and who had ridiculed him. Having put all of these forth, Jesus then took the child's parents and the three disciples to witness the miracle, and went in to the place where the child was. This arrangement would prevent any misconception, and would guard against any false reports; for these witnesses could be trusted to see and understand just exactly what took place. If the house had been full of excited men and women, it would have been difficult to understand the words of Jesus, or to see that which he did. It is better to have a few chosen witnesses, than a large number who could see and hear only a part of that which was said and done. (Cf. Acts 10: 40, 41.)

And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise. And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked;

for she was twelve years old. Mark records the Aramaic words which Jesus spoke on that occasion, and then gave their meaning, so that the readers who did not understand that language would know what was meant. Aramaic was a dialect, closely related to the Hebrew, which was spoken in Palestine at that time; and it may be described as the vernacular of the common people. The words which Jesus employed were those which anyone of that day might have used to awaken a child in the morning. The little girl responded to the Lord's call, and rose up and walked. (Cf. John 5: 25.)

And they were amazed straightway with great amazement. And he

charged them that no man should know this: and he commanded that something should be given her to eat. They were astounded and filled with bewilderment when they saw that which Jesus did. Someone has said that faith in God's great promises is seldom so strong that fulfillment fails to waken astonishment. Jesus probably forbade the spreading of this news, in order to keep his work from being hindered by further importunities to raise the dead. Although the child's life had been restored and her body had been healed by a miracle, her life must be invigorated and sustained by natural means. That was the reason for commanding that something should be given her to eat.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

During what great period in the life of Christ did this lesson occur?
Why was it often necessary for him to get away from the multitudes?
Why did Jesus perform so many miracles?
What did John say regarding this question?
What did the fact that divine power attended the words of Jesus prove?
What did this particular series of miracles prove for Jesus?

The Golden Text

Give the general setting of the golden text.
Read the entire psalm from which it is taken.
What application does the golden text have for us today?

A Father's Request

Where had Jesus been prior to this lesson? and what had he done?
To what place did he return?
At what point in the life of Jesus does this lesson begin?
What request was made and by whom?
What was a "ruler of the synagogue"?
What was the attitude of the ruler toward Jesus? and why?
What lesson should we learn from this?
Why would people want to go to Jesus when they were in trouble?
What should we learn from this fact?

What happened on the way to the ruler's house?

The Trial of Faith

In what way was Jairus' faith tried?
What did Jesus say to him? and why?
Why is it often necessary to strengthen the faith of others?
Did Jesus imply that he would obtain the desired blessing by faith only? Give reasons for your answer.

Power over Death

Why did Jesus allow only three of his disciples to accompany him?
On what other occasions were these same three so signally honored?
How did Jesus restrain the multitude?
What did he find when he reached the ruler's house?
Why were such things done in the presence of death?
What did Jesus do when he entered the house? and why?
Why say that the child was only asleep?
What effect did this have on the mourners?
Why is it sometimes a good idea to get the opposition to take a pronounced stand before stating the truth?
Who went with Jesus into the death chamber? and why only them?
Is it either fair or wise to select witnesses to a great event? Give reasons for your answer.
Describe the circumstances of the resurrection on this occasion.
What effect did it produce? and why?
Why command to give the child something to eat?

Lesson VI—February 7, 1960

JESUS TEACHES IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Lesson Text

Mark 6: 1-13

1 And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were aston-

ished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and *what mean* such mighty works wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Jo'-ses, and Ju'-das, and Si'-mon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him.

4 And Je'-sus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

And he went round about the villages teaching.

7 And he calleth unto him the

twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits:

8 And he charged them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse;

9 But *to go* shod with sandals: and, *said he*, put not on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, Where-soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence.

11 And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them.

12 And they went out, and preached that *men* should repent.

13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Golden Text.—“*A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country* (Mark 6: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 12: 3-8.

Daily Bible Readings

- February 1. M..... Faithful Servant Rewarded (1 Kings 3: 5-14)
- February 2. T..... Serving Without Money (Mark 6: 7-13)
- February 3. W..... Example of Humble Service (John 6: 5-14)
- February 4. T..... Using Our Talents (Matt. 25: 14-30)
- February 5. F..... Acceptable Service (Rom. 12: 3-8)
- February 6. S..... Faithful Teachers Needed (1 Tim. 4: 1-16)
- February 7. S..... Jesus and His Family (Matt. 13: 53-58)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACES.—Nazareth and parts of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the people, and the twelve.

Introduction

The attitude of the people of Nazareth toward Jesus was nothing unusual. Men have always thought that they had to account for him, and the Nazarenes therefore were only giving expression to a common practice when they asked, “Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” The desire to account for the “Man of Galilee” is one of the remarkable things about him, and it is enough to cause all of us to stop and think. No other person in human history affects us in this manner. No other man so persistently arouses in us the question, “Who art thou?” and forces us to feel that he is completely different from any other person who ever walked upon the earth.

The uniqueness of Christ does not stem from the fact that no other ex-

ceptional men have lived upon the earth. Many such men have left their marks upon the sands of time, but not a single one of them has caused us to feel that we are compelled to account for him. The lives of others compel an interest on our part, but Jesus demands an explanation. He is revealed in the gospel records as a humble Galilean peasant; but in three short years he laid the foundation for the greatest kingdom and the purest religion this world has ever seen; and he has so woven his own personality into the texture of that religion as to become its central figure, with the value of God for all his followers.

This exalted position of Jesus did not come to him as the result of

long-delayed meditation and reflection by men of later years. The people who lived most continuously in his immediate presence were the first to recognize his true worth. Is it any wonder, then, that from that day forward when men and women truly

met him they recognized in him a problem which they could not evade? Jesus, indeed, must be identified, but the mistake the Nazarenes made was in only partially identifying him. His identity must be complete, if we are to understand him as we should.

The Golden Text

This portion of this lesson will be considered in the regular order of the

lesson, since it is found in the lesson text.

The Text Explained

Another Visit to Nazareth

(Mark 6: 1-6a)

And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him. The Lord's own country was Nazareth. Luke, in describing a previous visit there, says, "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up." (Luke 4: 16a.) Jesus lived in that city from early childhood (see Matt. 2: 22, 23; Luke 2: 42, 51), until he went to Capernaum to live, following his rejection at Nazareth, as recorded in Luke 4: 16-31. (Cf. Matt. 4: 12, 13) It was pointed out in a previous lesson that the gospel writers did not always follow the chronological order in recording the events in the life of Christ; and that fact makes it somewhat difficult to place certain events in their proper places. But if all the records are studied together, it is fairly easy to get a general idea of the order of events in the life of our Lord.

The place from which Jesus went to Nazareth was Capernaum; and it appears that this was very soon after he had raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. Some time had elapsed since his first rejection at Nazareth had occurred. At that time his fellow townspeople had tried to kill him, but now he is returning again, no doubt with the idea of bringing to them a blessing. He was like the good shepherd who was seeking for the lost sheep, and the kindly physician who would heal the illnesses of his people. His disciples accompanied him on this trip.

And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what

mean such mighty works wrought by his hands? These former neighbors of Jesus readily recognized and acknowledged the fact that he was manifesting power and wisdom which were more than human; but they were not prepared to admit that he came from God. On a previous visit to Nazareth, Luke says, "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country." (Luke 4: 22, 23.)

So now, for the second time at least, Jesus demonstrated before the people of Nazareth the power and the wisdom which God alone can give, but they did not believe in him. They were wholly unlike Nicodemus who said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (See John 3: 1, 2.) Miracles always arrest attention and challenge investigation: and they prove that he who works them is from God. At least that was the impression which they made on the mind of Nicodemus. (Cf. Acts 10: 38.)

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? are not his sisters here with us? Instead therefore of accepting the fact that Jesus must be that which he claimed to be, namely, the Son of God, these former neighbors of his endeavored to restrict him to their own way of thinking. The fact that they knew him and his family was sufficient, in their own estimation, to justify their rejection of him.

Matthew represents the Nazarenes as referring to Jesus as "the carpenter's son," while Mark has, "Is not this the carpenter?" Both expressions were probably used, and each writer recorded one of them. The manner in which Mark refers to Jesus is strong evidence that Jesus actually worked as a carpenter during the time he lived in Nazareth. Joseph was a carpenter and he no doubt taught the trade to Jesus, as every Jewish youth was expected to learn some useful way to make a living. (Cf. Acts 18: 3.) In commenting on this aspect of the life of Jesus, Albert Barnes says,

"A useful employment is always honorable. Idleness is the parent of mischief. Our Saviour, therefore, spent the greatest part of his life in honest, useful industry. Till the age of thirty he did not choose to enter on his great work; and it was proper before that time that he should set an example to the world of honorable though humble industry. Life is not wasted in such employments. They are appointed as the lot of man; and in the faithful discharge of duties in the relations of life, though obscure; in honest industry, however humble; in patient labor, if connected with a life of religion, we may be sure that God will approve our conduct. It was, moreover, the custom of the Jews—even those of wealth and learning—to train all their children to some *trade* or manual occupation. Thus Paul was a tent-maker." (Cf. Acts 18: 3.)

If it were not for the papal doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, there would be no question regarding the relationship of the four men mentioned in the passage now under consideration. No one can read such passages as Matt. 12: 46, 47; Acts 1: 14; and Gal. 1: 19 without being impressed with the fact that Jesus did have some brothers in the flesh, or, more correctly, half brothers. There is a widespread feeling among Bible students that James and Judas mentioned here were the authors of the New Testament epistles which bear their names. It should be observed that "Jude" is a contraction of Judas. The names of the sisters are not recorded in the gospel narratives.

And they were offended in him.

The marginal reading for "offended" is *caused to stumble*, that is, led into error or sin. It is pertinent to ask why they manifested such an attitude toward Jesus, and the answer seems to involve several considerations. First, they thought that they knew all about him, but as a matter of fact they knew only a little about his outward life. They knew nothing of his intimate relationship with his Father. (Cf. John 8: 12-19; Luke 2: 41-50.)

In the next place their superficial thinking led them to believe that it would be impossible for them to live beside the Son of God without knowing it. (Cf. John 6: 42; 7: 25-27.) This is one of the most common mistakes made by people today. (See Matt. 25: 31-46; Acts 22: 3-8.) And too, the people of Nazareth were under the impression that any introduction to God would have to be externally authenticated and guaranteed. (Cf. John 7: 40-49.) It apparently never occurred to them that Jesus could speak as God's representative without the authority and backing of the scribes and priests. (See Matt. 7: 28, 29; John 12: 48-50.)

And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. McGarvey notes that it is jealousy which prevents a prophet from being honored in his own country and by his own people. This attitude on the part of those who live closest to the prophet is so widespread as to make it proverbial. Thus, in Nazareth Jesus was no more than the son of a carpenter, himself a carpenter, and the brother of certain very ordinary men and women whom they all knew, or thought they knew. But in other parts of the country, Jesus was proclaimed as a prophet of God, mighty in word and deed. (See Luke 24: 19.)

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. It appears that the Lord's inability to perform miracles in Nazareth was not due to any effort on the part of the people to limit his power and prevent the exercise of it, but rather because in their unbelief they refused to bring the afflicted to him. This is clearly im-

plied in the statement, "save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." This is to say that he healed all who were brought to him. The Bible nowhere teaches that the Lord's power to work miracles was dependent upon the faith of the people; for he sometimes healed where no faith was in evidence. (Cf. Luke 22: 50, 51.) But, as in the case now before us, Jesus did not perform miracles for people against their will.

The New Testament records only two instances in which Jesus is said to have marvelled, namely, Mark 6: 6 and Luke 7: 9. Matt. 8: 10 is the same as Luke 7: 9. On one occasion he marvelled at great faith, while on the other because of a lack of faith. This, incidentally, should convince all people that faith is not something which is miraculously given to people; for if that were the way of it, the very character of Jesus would have required him to give faith to the people of his own city; otherwise he would have been a respecter of persons.

It is clearly implied that the unbelief of the people of Nazareth grew out of their attitude toward Jesus; and it is in order to ask, What is the result of prejudicial thinking? (1) *It is self-contradictory.* It marvels at the truth which is spoken and the deeds which are performed, while continuing to held to the idea that a poor an dun-influential neighbor cannot be a great teacher. They did not question either the message or the works, but only the ability of the man who had lived among them!

(2) *It is manifestly foolish.* This is true because the merits of a doctrine are always independent of the circumstances of the teacher. Furthermore, some of the greatest teachers the world has ever seen came up from the lowest ranks of life. (3) *It is lamentably pernicious.* It prevents people from believing the truth. (Cf. Acts 17: 1-12), and makes impossible the work which God could and would do for them. (Cf. Matt. 13: 57, 58; Acts 13: 44ff; John 5: 40.)

The Teaching Mission of Jesus

(Mark 6: 6b)

And he went round about the villages teaching. This is commonly known as the third circuit of Galilee which Jesus made. On the first cir-

cuit (Matt. 4: 23-25; Mark 1: 35-39; Luke 4: 42-44), he was accompanied by some of his disciples, probably the four fishermen. (Matt. 4: 18-22.) The second circuit is mentioned in Luke 8: 1-3, and it appears that the twelve went with him as apostles. But on the third circuit (Matt. 9: 35-11: 1; Mark 6: 6-13; Luke 9: 1-6), the twelve were themselves sent on a mission, two and two. But before sending them, Jesus gave them specific instructions for their journey, as may be seen by reading Matt. 10: 5-42.

The probable reason why Jesus sent the twelve on a separate mission from his own is found in Matt. 9: 36-38: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."

The Twelve Sent Forth

(Mark 6: 7-13)

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; The people of Galilee had been deeply stirred by the teaching and miracles of Jesus, but they had not yet learned in what direction this popular movement would go. They were, accordingly, in a bewildered state, like sheep without a shepherd, scattered over the hills, and weakened as a result of their hapless wandering. The twelve therefore were sent to assist Jesus, as under-shepherds, in gathering these sheep to places of safety.

McGarvey and Pendleton note three probable reasons for sending them forth in pairs, namely, (1) under the law it required two witnesses to establish the truth; (2) they could supplement each other's work; different men reach different minds, and where one fails another may succeed; (3) they would encourage one another; when one grew despondent the zeal and enthusiasm of the other would enliven his activities. Only Mark mentions the fact that Jesus sent forth the twelve by two and two. (Cf. Luke 10: 1.)

And he gave them authority over the unclean spirits; This is the only

specific power given to the apostles which Mark mentions, although he implies other powers in Verse 13. Matthew says that they were to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." (10:8.)

And he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only: no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse; but to go shod with sandals: and, said he, put not on two coats. The prohibition against providing adequate supplies to meet their needs while on this journey did not grow out of the fact that such would not be needed; but since they were being sent to their own brethren who had always been taught to support religious teachers among their people, these things would be supplied by the ones who would be benefited by their teaching and miraculous ministry. Their needs would be supplied on the basis of the principle that "the laborer is worthy of his food." (Matt. 10: 10b.) Later on when the apostles were sent on their world-wide mission, no such prohibition was given.

And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. And

whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them. The Jews regarded the dust of the Gentiles as being impure and to be shaken from their feet. So, when teachers shook the dust from their feet it was the same as saying that the people against whom that was done were heathenish and unworthy of the blessing of God. (Cf. Acts 13: 51; 18: 6.)

And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. Their message was the same as that of John and Jesus; the people needed to get right with God, so that they could receive the blessings of the Messiah. The oil was not for medicinal purposes, but was used by the Jews to anoint their head and faces, when they went out among their fellows. It was, however, omitted when they were sick. (Cf. 2 Sam. 12: 20; Matt. 6: 16-18.) To anoint the head, then, was a sign or symbol that the person was restored to health and no longer confined to his home. (Cf. James 5: 13-15.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why would the people of Nazareth question the power and wisdom of Jesus?
Why do people feel that they must account for him?
What is the basis of the uniqueness of Jesus?
What can you say of his influence upon the world?
How did people come to recognize the exalted position of Jesus?

Another Visit to Nazareth

What was "his own country"?
How long was Nazareth his home?
What is known of a previous visit to that place?
Why would he want to go back there again?
What was the occasion for the questions regarding him at this time?
Why wouldn't the miracles convince them that he was divine?
How did his former neighbors seek to identify him?
What does the term "carpenter" suggest regarding the life of Jesus?
How does God look upon honest toil? Why?
Were the four men mentioned here the half-brothers of Jesus? Give reasons for your answer.

Why has the matter ever been questioned?
In what way were the Nazarenes "offended" in him?
What does superficial thinking usually do for one?
Why was a prophet without honor in his own home?
Why does Jesus "marvel" at them? and what does that mean?
Why couldn't Jesus do many mighty works there? Give reasons for your answer.
Is the power of God dependent upon the faith of others? Give reasons for your answer.
What are some of the direct results of prejudicial thinking?

The Teaching Mission of Jesus

Give some of the facts regarding the teaching mission of Jesus.
Why did he choose to go alone on this one?

The Twelve Sent Forth

Why would the apostles be sent on a similar mission?
Give some reasons for sending them by two and two?
Do you think that that would be a good plan for today? Give reasons for your answer.
What authority and power did he give to them? Why?
What charge did he give to them regarding their personal needs? Why?

Does that prohibition apply to us? Give reason for your answer.
 What was to be their attitude toward their auditors?
 Why shake the dust from their feet when

they were not received?
 What was the burden of their preaching?
 Why?
 Why anoint the sick with oil?

Lesson VII—February 14, 1960

FEEDING THE MULTITUDES

Lesson Text

Mark 6: 30-44

30 And the apostles gather themselves together unto Je'-sus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught.

31 And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart.

33 And *the people* saw them going, and many knew *them*, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them.

34 And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

42 And they 'all ate, and were filled.

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"*(Matt. 20: 28.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 6: 27-35.

Daily Bible Readings

February 8 .	M.	Feeding the Hungry (Mark 6: 30-34)
February 9 .	T.	Hungry Fed and Taught (John 21: 1-15)
February 10 .	W.	Bread for the Hungry (John 6: 41-51)
February 11 .	T.	Ministering to the Nations (Isa. 35: 1-10)
February 12 .	F.	Jesus, the Humble Servant (Phil. 2: 1-11)
February 13 .	S.	No More Hunger (Rev. 7: 9-17)
February 14 .	S.	Food Promised (Psalm 37: 25; Matt. 6: 33)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—A desert place northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the apostles, and the multitude.

Introduction

The feeding of the five thousand is one miracle which all four of the with the five loaves and two fishes gospel writers record; but it is worthy

of note that they do not all assign the same reason for the withdrawal into the desert place by Christ and the twelve. Matthew (14: 13-21), says that when Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, "he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart." (Mark 6: 30-44), notes that when the twelve gave their report concerning their preaching mission that Jesus said unto them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Luke (9: 10-17), gives substantially the same reason that Mark does, but it is possible to gather from his narrative that Jesus wanted to get away from Herod too. (See 9: 9.)

John (6: 1-14), does not assign any particular reason for the withdrawal into the desert place, but simply allows the miracle to stand out in "isolated distinctness"; and he apparently introduced it, not so much for the miracle itself, but rather as the occasion for the sermon on the bread of life which follows. (See John 6: 22-59.) It should be noted, however, that there is no contradiction or inconsistency in the reasons which are

given for the withdrawal into the quiet retreat. It is no doubt true that all the reasons which were assigned were present. It would be natural for Jesus to want to get away from Herod, and to find a quiet place for meditation following the death of John; and the twelve would need some rest following their preaching tour through Galilee.

Luke identifies the place of the intended withdrawal, namely, "to a city called Bethsaida." Although Bible students are not all agreed regarding the exact location of this Bethsaida, it appears more reasonable to identify it as "Bethsaida Julias," which was east of the Jordan, and northeast of the lake of Galilee. (See map.) The Bethsaida which was the home of Peter and Andrew, and also Philip (John 1: 44), was evidently in the vicinity of Capernaum, if indeed it was not a suburb of that city. It was in the uninhabited country around Bethsaida that Jesus hoped to find rest for himself and his disciples when they departed from the thickly populated areas on the northwestern shores of the lake.

The Golden Text

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." The idea of service as the law of the kingdom of God was not new in Jewish thought when Christ was here upon the earth. Isaiah, more than seven hundred years earlier had emphasized over and over again the fact that the coming Messiah and Redeemer would be a servant. Both the Saviour and the saved are to serve; that is the only way to greatness. Jesus was talking about this very thing when he spoke the words of this text. His disciples had been disputing about how to become great when "Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20: 25-28.)

But if Jesus had not emphasized

the glory of service by his teaching, his mind would have been made plain by his example when at the last passover supper he arose from the table, laid aside his garments and girded himself with a towel; and taking the place of a menial servant in an eastern household, he washed the disciples' feet, including those of Judas who was about to betray him. And when he had finished the washing and had taken his garments and sat down again, he said unto them, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." (See John 13: 1-17.)

In the words of another: "At the banquet of life, as Jesus interprets life, the greater a man is the more

menial is the service which he is ready to undertake. True greatness among the Lord's followers is only to be achieved by the humility which takes the lowest place, and the unselfishness which makes work for others the guiding principle of conduct. No single point perhaps in the original and many-sided teaching of

Jesus has stirred men's consciences more deeply, or revolutionized their theory of duty more completely. If he had left behind him no other thought than this, this alone would have marked him out in the eyes of posterity as a moral teacher of unsurpassed greatness." (The Speaker's Bible—Matthew, Vol. III, p. 87.)

The Text Explained

Life Also Needs Rest

(Mark 6: 30-32)

And the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught.

The reference here is to the return of the twelve after they had finished their first tour of Galilee. Their work had been completed, and they had returned to Capernaum to report to Jesus.

And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. People often have a one-sided, incomplete idea of Christianity. Too many of us think of it as making a continuous appeal to our sense of duty, a constant claim upon our moral nature, as it seeks to arouse, stimulate, awaken, and encourage us to greater efforts in the Master's service. The gospel, of course, does send forth calls like these, but that is not all that it does. The Lord knows our nature and he understands what we can bear; and he has, accordingly, provided for times of rest and meditation. There is therefore value in occasional retirement from the busy walks of life. We must have these breathing periods if we are to strengthen our bodies, stimulate our minds, and prolong our usefulness here among men. Remember it was Jesus who said to his disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."

And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart. It was approximately five miles across the lake from Capernaum to their place of debarkation. A ride like this would also be restful to them, much more so than walking around the head of the lake where a crowd would be certain to follow them. The "desert place" to which they were going could prob-

ably be seen from the hills around Capernaum, and the uncultivated tablelands across the lake would provide an ideal place for rest and meditation.

The Crowds Follow

(Mark 6: 33, 34)

And the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them. As noted in a previous lesson, the people of Galilee had been greatly stirred by the teaching and miracles of Jesus, and being filled with great expectation regarding him, they were unwilling to let him get out of their sight. Many of them were present when Jesus and the disciples entered the sailboat, and as soon as they could determine the direction they were going, they set out on foot, so

as to be there when the boat arrived. Their foot route would be around the northern end of the lake and across the Jordan near the place where it flowed into the lake. The vicinity of Capernaum was thickly populated, and it would not take very long for a great crowd to begin that journey. As Jesus and the twelve were sailing leisurely with the wind, the people were hastening on foot; and the result was that the pedestrians arrived at the landing place first.

And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. Instead of finding a place where they could enjoy a period of privacy, Jesus and the disciples were met by a vast multitude of people who were anxious to hear his words and see his miracles. But Jesus showed no signs of irritation when he saw the people. He saw their great need, and his heart was filled with compassion for them.

It is always interesting to observe how a crowd affects different people.

Some are disgusted, some entertained, while others are wearied. But in the case of Jesus, it was with compassion. He was able to see the multitude, not simply as a crowd, but as individuals; and he was able to put himself in their places and feel what they felt. He loved each one with a love which was founded on a knowledge that embraces all who live. It is interesting and helpful to read the life of Jesus and observe the number of times he forgot his own weariness to speak the words of life and minister to the needy. (Cf. John 4: 6.)

The People Are Fed

(Mark 6: 35-44)

And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent; send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat. The disciples probably felt their own hunger, and that led them to think of the multitude. They evidently realized that they had been without food for most of the day, and that if something was not done soon, many of them would faint while attempting to get home.

But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat? John's record contains this statement: "Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." Jesus probably spoke to Philip before he addressed the words of the text now before us to all the disciples.

A shilling, according to the marginal reading, was worth nearly seventeen cents, which means that the disciples estimated that it would require some thirty-three or thirty-four dollars to buy enough bread, so that each person could have a little. That may not seem to be a very great sum, as we think of money today; but if we take into consideration the pur-

chasing power of the shilling of that day, along with the fact that that was the regular price for a day's labor (Cf. Matt. 20: 2), we can see that to the disciples it was a huge amount.

And he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. According to John, it was Andrew who said to Jesus, "There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?" The fact that this food was in possession of the lad has given rise to the idea that that was probably his lunch. McGarvey and Pendleton note that eastern loaves were thin and small; similar to good-sized crackers, and, around the sea of Galilee, the salting and preserving of small fish was a profitable industry. These fish were probably about the size of sardines. The whole supply, therefore, was no more than enough for one hungry boy; but each loaf had to be divided between a thousand, and each fish between twenty-five hundred men!

There is an important lesson here for all of us today, and especially when we feel our own insignificance in the face of many great problems. We look at the deplorable condition of the world about us, and that which needs to be done for its betterment, and then look at each other and exclaim, What can we do! But as we contemplate this kind of a situation, we must not forget the story of the lad, his loaves and fishes, and what the Lord did with them. The practical benefit of this lesson to us is not the happening of a moment, but the ministry of the ages. One can believe that Jesus had more than one motive in mind when he performed this miracle. One of them, no doubt, was to teach his disciples, who were then getting ready for their long ministry, what vast resources they had in him. It was Paul who later on exclaimed, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. The fact that "green grass" was growing there shows that it was not a barren waste, as people so often think of a desert. It was an uncultivated and uninhabited portion of the

country, with "villages round about." Several things were accomplished by having the people arranged in orderly companies of hundreds and fifties.

(1) It would be easier for the apostles to get the food to them. (2) It made certain that each person would be fed. (3) It also made it certain that the miracle could not be questioned. And (4) it provided an easy and accurate way to count the people.

And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. In commenting on this act of Jesus, Albert Barnes says, "The word to *bless* means, often, to give thanks; sometimes to pray for a blessing; that is, to pray for the divine favor and friendship; to pray that what we do may meet his approbation. In seeking a blessing on our food, it means that we pray that it may be made nourishing to our bodies; that we may have proper gratitude to God, the Giver, for providing for our wants; and that we may remember the Creator while we partake the bounties of his providence. Our Saviour *always* sought a blessing on his food. In this he was an example for us. What he did we should do. It is right thus to seek the blessing of God. He provides for us; he daily opens his hand and satisfies our wants, and it is proper that we should render suitable acknowledgements for his goodness." Paul distinctly says that God created meats "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 re-

ceived with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. 4: 3-5.)

And they all ate, and were filled. And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes. And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men. Matthew says, "And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children." When Philip estimated that it would take two hundred shillings' worth of bread in order for each one to have a little, he was calculating in terms of bare necessity; but Mark declares that all of the great multitude not only ate, but that they were filled, that is, their desire for food on that occasion was completely satisfied.

The broken pieces which were gathered up after the people had eaten were not the bits of food which they had cast away, but were the parts of the loaves and fishes which had not been touched by them. That much was left over after every one had been sufficed. John says that Jesus told his disciples to "gather up the broken pieces *which remain over*, that nothing be lost." Thus the amount which was left over after the people had eaten was much greater than the entire amount they had to begin with.

It is interesting to note that the original word for "basket" here is different from the one used for *basket* in the case of the feeding of the four thousand, when seven basketfuls were left over. Basket here is a small one, like a lunch basket, whereas the other was like a hamper. (Cf. 2 Cor. 11: 32, 33.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What is peculiar with reference to the feeding of the five thousand?
Why did Christ and the disciples go to the desert at this time?
Where was the place of their retreat?

The Golden Text

What can you say of the idea of service as the law of the kingdom of God?
What was the disciples' idea of greatness?
What lesson did Jesus teach them on this subject?
How did Jesus illustrate his teaching with reference to the glory of service?
In what way only may true greatness be achieved?

Life Also Needs Rest

What did the disciples do when they returned from their mission?
What, according to Mark, did Jesus say to them? Why?
What is the usual idea that people have of Christianity?
Why is rest necessary to a well-balanced life?
Why did they travel by boat, rather than by foot?
What was meant by a "desert place"?

The Crowds Follow

What did the people do when they saw them leave?
Why were they so anxious to be with Jesus?
How could they travel faster on foot and reach the desert place first?

How did Jesus react to the presence of the great crowd?

Why did he have compassion on the people?

Discuss the way in which crowds affect different people, and explain why this is so.

How did Jesus regard his own weariness when the needy were before him?

The People Are Fed

What proposal was made as the day began to wear away?

Why did Jesus say, "Give ye them to eat"?

How did the disciples react to this?

Can you reconcile Mark's and John's report of this incident?

What was the value of a shilling?

What kind of loaves and fishes did they have?

What lesson should we learn from the smallness of the supply?

How can we apply the lesson in our own lives?

Why have the people sit down in companies of fifty and one hundred?

What did Jesus do before breaking the loaves and fishes? Why?

What does the Bible teach regarding our giving thanks for our food?

How many people were fed on this occasion?

What is said about the amount they ate?

What were the broken pieces which were taken up?

What command did Jesus give regarding them?

How did the amount left over compare with the supply they had to begin with?

What impression did the miracle make on the people?

What kind of baskets did they fill with the remaining pieces?

How did this supply compare with the amount left over when the four thousand were fed?

Lesson VIII—February 21, 1960

AUTHORITY IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

Lesson Text

Mark 7: 1-13

1 And there are gathered together unto him the Phar'-i-sees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Jeru'-sa-lem,

2 And had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands.

3 (For the Phar'-i-sees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders;

4 And when they come from the marketplace, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels.)

5 And the Phar'-i-sees, and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands?

6 And he said unto them, Well did i'-sa'-iah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

This people honoreth me with their lips,

GOLDEN TEXT.—"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 24: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

- February 15. M.....Error Regarding Worship (Mark 7: 1-14)
- February 16. T.....Error Regarding Place of Worship (John 4: 19-26)
- February 17. W.....Error Regarding Prayer (2 Cor. 12: 1-10)
- February 18. T.Error Regarding Forgiveness (Matt. 18: 21-35)

But their heart is far from me.

7 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

8 Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.

9 And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition.

10 For Mo'-ses said, Honor thy Father and thy mother; and He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Cor'-ban, that is to say, Given to God;

12 Ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother;

13 Making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.

February 19. F.....Error Regarding Happiness (Luke 12: 13-21)
 February 20. S.....Error Regarding Serving God (Matt. 25: 31-46)
 February 21. S.....Error Regarding Meats (Col. 2: 20-22)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Galilee, probably in Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Pharisees.

Introduction

The question of authority in religion has been prominent in all ages of the world, and no one can consider the religion of Christ without having that subject brought to his attention. It was discussed by the religious leaders of his day, and by him; and it has been discussed by religious people in every age since the Lord was here upon the earth. It has been said that a subject is half argued when it is clearly stated; and it is for that reason that great care should be exercised in the effort to state the issue of authority in the clearest terms possible.

It is easy to see that the point of contrast in the lesson now before us is with reference to the authority of God and the traditions of men. Men have always endeavored to place their traditions on a level with the commandments of God, and when that is done it has the effect of nullifying the commandments of God. It is for this reason that God has never

allowed man to bring his own ideas into the realm of authority in the religion which was divinely prescribed. This truth can be plainly seen by anyone who is willing to read God's requirements for any age of the world.

The Jewish race, at the time that Jesus entered upon his public ministry, was so divided religiously that it was impossible for him to avoid conflict with the religious leaders and escape criticism and censure. It is a well known fact that he made no effort to exclude any group from his audience, or to evade any important question. So when the scribes and Pharisees came to him with the question which is discussed in the lesson which we are to consider today, he drew the contrast between their teaching and his, and left the issue so clearly stated as to leave no doubt in the mind of any honest person regarding the will of God.

The Golden Text

All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." It was God's original intention that all men be subject to him in all things, but man had not been on the earth long before he was influenced by "the prince of this world" to forsake the way of righteousness, and turn his allegiance to another. This resulted in an estrangement between God and man, and soon practically the whole world was in rebellion against the Creator and Father of mankind. But that did not cause God to cease to love man, or to desire that he would return to his former place; and in the process of time that love was translated into action. (Cf. John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8.)

God sent his Son into the world for the express purpose of redeeming man from sin. His commission was to challenge the power of Satan, and force his kingdom into subjection or ultimate destruction. (Cf. Heb. 2:

14: 1 John 3: 8.) But an assignment like this required the greatest authority possible; and it was for this reason that all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Jesus. He has the authority to invade the enemy territory and lead men out of captivity and into his glorious kingdom, and then to reign over the redeemed in all things. "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 22, 23.)

Paul clearly states the extent of the reign of Christ in the following words: "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that

shall be abolished is death. 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 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: 24-28; cf. 2 Cor. 5: 18f.)

The Text Explained

The Occasion of the Discussion

(Mark 7: 1-5)

And there are gathered unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashed, hands. Mark has already stated repeatedly that the enemies of Jesus were watching him, seeking to find some charge which they might bring against him. Some of the scribes and Pharisees had even come all the way from Jerusalem for this unholy purpose. It is remarkably true that some people will go further and put forth greater effort to injure someone than to help.

On the occasion of our lesson, the critics of Jesus saw some of his disciples eat their food without first washing their hands, not for cleanliness, but to keep a tradition. To them that was sufficient for the basis of serious criticism against the disciples. Some of the extremes to which these Jewish leaders went are set forth in the following quotation from Budden and Hastings, *The Local Colour of the Bible*:

"The water used for these ceremonial washings was taken from large stone jars kept specially for the purpose. These were the jars used by our Lord in the miracle of the marriage feast at Cana. (John 2: 6.) It was the custom to draw water out of them with a special vessel which held at least a quart of a log, a measure equal to one and a half "egg-shells," and to pour it on the hands as they were held over a basin. The hands were lifted up so that the water ran to the wrists, thus preventing the defilement of the washed portions by a return of the used water. The hands had also to be free from gross dirt such as soil. The one hand was rubbed with the fist of the other.

"If the hands were known to be ceremonially defiled by contact with anything, then two affusions were necessary, the 'first waters' to remove the defilement, and the 'second wa-

ters' to wash away the water that had contacted the defilement of the hands. Accordingly for the first washing the hands were elevated so that the water ran down to the wrists, while for the second washing, the hands were held down so that the water might run off from the finger-tips. Later two affusions became the constant rule, while the modern Jews affect a triple washing, the rite being accompanied by a special benediction." (Vol. III, p. 76f.)

(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the marketplace, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels.) Wells notes that in mingling with the crowd in the marketplaces, the Jews felt themselves to have contracted so much impurity that they must bathe themselves all over before eating. Their rules for the washing of dishes and utensils were most minute, both as to the amount of water to be used and the exact manner of washing. Earthen vessels that had become ceremonially defiled must be broken and thrown away. These rules were not derived from the law of Moses, but were gradually built up by the rabbis, and handed down by tradition.

It is easy for one to get the wrong impression regarding the *washing* of cups, pots, and brasen vessels, since that was a universal custom, both then and now, that is, it is still a custom for people to wash such things. The original word for "washing" is *baptismous*, and it literally means to immerse. The idea is not that the people washed the articles named when they needed washing, but that they immersed or dipped them when they did not need to be cleansed, but only to keep a tradition.

And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples

according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? The lesson now before us shows that the Jews in the Saviour's time attached more importance to the traditions of their elders, that is, their ancestors or the ones who had preceded them, than they did to the Scriptures themselves. It is most unfortunate that that practice did not die with that generation. It is almost as much alive now as it was then. It is said that they compared the written word to water, and the traditionary exposition to the wine which had to be mingled with it. Alford notes that so rigidly did the Jews observe the traditions of the ancients, that Rabbi Akiba, being imprisoned, and having water scarcely sufficient to sustain life given to him, preferred to die with thirst than to eat without washing his hands.

Condemned by the Scriptures

(Mark 6: 6-8)

And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. Jesus pointed out to those critics that their traditions (and the same principle holds true today), prevented their doing God's will. Their hypocritical observance of the traditions of their ancestors was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, and to violate the law of God, if that was necessary in order to keep their traditions, was of little consequence to them.

This passage plainly shows that it is possible for men to worship God in vain. Such is done when people claim to be worshipping God, while following the teaching of men. The teaching of Jesus is very specific on this question. "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." (Matt. 7: 21-23.) Although these people claimed

to be serving Christ, it was service which he did not authorize; and the result was that he did not recognize or endorse them. Their service was in vain.

Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. This is the Lord's application of Isaiah's prophecy to the people of his day; and he will cite examples of it further on in this lesson. But the people of that day were not alone in leaving the word of God for the traditions of men. Here is the way The Speaker's Bible puts the matter: "Let us apply our Lord's warning to our own case. We, too, have a word and commandment of God, a Word of God deeper, completer, fuller by far than any given to the Jews. The Word of God has been spoken to us by the very Son of God incarnate, Jesus Christ. That word is faithfully recorded for us in the pages of the Gospels, and it is interpreted for us in manifold ways in the Apostolic Epistles. We have the Word of God, and yet it is not hard to think of ways in which we have left the Word of God and substituted our own traditions."

The Lord's Application

(Mark 7: 9-13)

And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do ought for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do. In replying to the implied criticism of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus did not refer directly to the question of uncleanness, but chose, rather, to cite a specific commandment of God which they had set aside by their tradition. This would show the direction of their traditions, and would, of course, demonstrate that they were in direct conflict with the will of God.

In replying to the Jewish leaders, Jesus called to their attention the proper attitude which children were

taught to have toward their parents. This required that they show them the proper respect, and also contribute to their physical needs if their condition warranted it. This was the plain teaching of the word of God. But the Jews had a custom of devoting their property to God, according to their own view of the matter, that is to say, they did something which God did not require of them. But when once that was done, it could not be recalled, even if their parents were in dire need. It was more important in their estimation to dedicate their property to God, according to their tradition, than it was to render assistance to their needy parents. Thus, in one act of theirs, they could forever free themselves from doing that which God commanded with reference to their father and mother. The term "corban" was the Hebrew word for a gift to God, or something sacred to him, involving an obligation.

In applying the principle of this lesson to our times, it should be noted that every human addition to the commandments of God has the direct result of nullifying the word of God itself. Take, for example, the practice of infant baptism. This tradition, to the extent that it is practiced, makes void the commandment of the Lord regarding the baptism of believers, by the so-called baptism of people in their infancy; and if the practice should become universal, by the baptism of all persons in their infancy, it would put to an end forever the only baptism which the word of God authorizes. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 18: 8.)

One of the popular doctrines of our day is that it is right to have more than one church, or that denominationalism is justified by the Scrip-

tures. But, in spite of the widespread acceptance of this teaching, the New Testament itself teaches the very opposite. (See *Mat. 16: 18*—"my church" is singular.) Paul says that "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12: 12, 13), and he further declares that the body is the church (Eph. 1: 22, 23), and that there is *but one body*. (See Eph. 4: 4; 1 Cor. 12: 20.) The unity of the church and denominationalism are diametrically opposed to each other; and if one is true, the other is not true. There is no logic which can make them both lie down in peace together.

The doctrine of salvation by faith only is taught in practically every place where professed believers in Christ are found. "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." (Methodist Discipline, Article 9. Cf. Episcopal Common Book of Prayer, Article 11.) But if this doctrine is true, then Martin Luther was right, and the entire Book of James is nothing more than an epistle of straw and deserves to be burned; for that book asks, "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?" (James 2: 14.) "Thai faith" is faith without works, as the remainder of the chapter plainly shows. The impotence of faith only in the matter of salvation is stated four times by James in one paragraph. (1) "Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself,"—2: 17; (2) "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren"—2: 20; (3) "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith"—2: 24; (4) "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead"—2: 26.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today's lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What can you say of the prominence of the question of authority in religion?
What is meant by "authority in religion"?
In what does the contrast in this lesson consist?
Why are people so interested in their traditions?
Who came to Jesus on the occasion of this lesson? and why?

The Golden Text

What was God's original intention regarding men?

Why did men turn away from God?

How has God always felt toward his people?

Why was such great authority given to Jesus?

Discuss the scope of the Lord's authority.

How long will the reign of Christ continue?

What will he do when it is over?

The Occasion of the Discussion

What was the occasion of the teaching now under consideration?

Why were the scribes and Pharisees there?

To what extent will some people go in order to find fault with others?

What was the object of the criticism on this occasion?

Why did the scribes and Pharisees want the disciples to wash their hands?

What did their tradition require them to do?

Describe a typical cleansing of this kind.

Why did they often require them to wash twice?

What were the "traditions of the elders" and who were the "elders"?

Why wash when they came from the marketplace?

What was their rule for washing cups, pots, and "brassen vessels"?

Is it wrong for people to wash their dishes? Give reasons for your answer.

What is the meaning for the original word for "washing"?

What question did the scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus?
How did they regard their traditions in the light of their attitude toward the Scriptures?

Condemned by the Scriptures

What had Isaiah said regarding such conduct?

What is vain worship?

What did Jesus say regarding the necessity of doing God's will?

What makes people "workers of iniquity"?

How did Jesus apply the prophecy of Isaiah to those people? Verse 8.

The Lord's Application

How did the Lord make his application?

Why not discuss the question of ceremonial uncleanness?

What does the Bible teach regarding the attitude of children toward their parents? and what does it involve?

How had the Jews made void the word of God?

How do people today do the same thing?

Cite some specific examples.

Lesson IX—February 28, 1960

WORLDLY AMBITION CONDEMNED

Lesson Text

Mark 9: 33-43

33 And they came to Ca-per'-na-um: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reason- ing on the way?

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

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

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

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

38 John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in

thy name; and we forbade him, be- cause he followed not us.

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

40 For he that is not against us is for us.

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." (Rom. 13: 10.)
DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—1 Cor. 13: 1-13.

Daily Bible Readings

- February 22. M.....Narrowness Rebuked (Mark 9: 45-50)
- February 23. T.....Humility Enjoined (Mark 9: 38-44)
- February 24. W.....Childlikeness (Mark 9: 30-37)
- February 25. T.....Cooperation Taught (Neh. 4: 15-23)
- February 26. F.....Waiting Together (Acts 1: 10-14)

February 27. S.....Worshipping Together (Heb. 10: 19-25)
 February 28. S. Individual Responsibility (1 Cor. 3: 5-11)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Christ and the disciples.

Introduction

The desire for greatness is characteristic of human beings. It is true that depravity has turned this principle into an evil direction, it was, nevertheless, implanted within us for the noblest of purposes, and it is, even in our present state, a witness to the immortal progress for which we were originally designed. It is not proper, therefore, to denounce this desire without reservation; for if it is directed in the right channel, it serves as the mainspring of the soul, and without it one's energy and elevation are at an end.

Inasmuch therefore as this desire for greatness belongs to our human nature, we should not seek its extirpation. Instead, we should give it a spiritual character, and turn it into a direction which will benefit others rather than simply ourselves. That is the way in which Jesus dealt with this question. (Cf. Matt. 20: 20-28.) After pointing out their mistaken view of what constitutes true greatness, and endeavoring to restore harmony among his followers, caused by their erroneous view of the subject now before us, he told them what

true greatness is, and bade them seek after it.

The word "worldly" should be carefully considered in this study; for it is the worldly attitude which is so foreign to the will of God. John admonishes, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2: 15.) James declares, "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.)

Worldliness, in its essence, is a state of mind rather than the doing of certain things. Character cannot be rightfully judged by single or isolated deeds, either good or bad. It is the trend of ones life which determines his destiny. When men and women are engrossed by the material things of life, and seek the greatness which belongs to this world, they are the people whose ambition is contrary to the will of God.

The Golden Text

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." The full context from which this passage is taken reads as follows: "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 fulfilment of the law." (Rom. 13: 8-10.)

The law is not fulfilled by a mere sentiment or feeling, but by deeds of helpfulness. This is in sharp contrast with the worldly ambition which is always characterized by selfishness. But the man who is mo-

tivated by love for his fellow man will at once refrain from doing him any harm, and will seek to do him good. When we love our neighbor as we do ourselves we will treat him as we would have him treat us; and this attitude will lead us to do him good always.

No finer commentary on the working of love can be found than the passage which Paul penned in 1 Cor. 13: 4-7: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

The Text Explained

A Selfish Dispute
(Mark 9: 33, 34)

And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning on the way? The return to Capernaum was from Caesarea Philippi, and they are now in Capernaum for the last time before the Lord's death on the cross. As has already been noted, Capernaum, located on the northwestern shores of the sea of Galilee, became the home and headquarters of Jesus during his personal ministry, and especially his Galilean ministry. It is possible that Jesus lived in the house with Simon and Andrew, and this may have been the house in which this conversation took place.

While on the return to Capernaum, the disciples had had a heated discussion regarding which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom which they expected Christ to establish. They evidently still thought that his kingdom would be an earthly one, and they were hoping for places of high honor in it. (Cf. Acts 1: 6.) Jesus did not ask the question for information, as his subsequent actions show; but was evidently seeking to arouse their consciences and prepare their minds for that which was to follow.

But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another on the way, who was the greatest. From Matt. 18: 1 it appears that the subject was introduced, not by Jesus, but by the disciples themselves, who came and asked Jesus who would be the greatest in the kingdom, or, "who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The probability is that the disciples, or at least some of them, did ask him, but that he deferred the answer until they were all assembled in the house in Capernaum. Jesus had seen the reasoning of their heart (Luke 9: 47), and so now at the appropriate time and under suitable circumstances he questions them about the dispute; and, as someone has said, they were put to the blush, conscious of the temper which it had kindled toward each other. The question as to who would be the greatest was doubtless suggested by the recent announcement which Jesus made regarding the kingdom (Cf. Matt. 16: 18, 19), his transfiguration, and the

preference which had been given to the three, Peter, James and John, and especially the remark about Peter's having the keys of the kingdom.

The Child in the Midst
(Mark 9: 35-37)

And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all. Sitting was the common posture of Hebrew teachers, and it was especially appropriate for Jesus; for his instruction was didactic rather than oratorical. The fact that he called the twelve indicates that he wanted them all to hear this important lesson. It can be seen from Luke's account that the disciples had been disputing as to which person would be the greatest; but in his reply Jesus gave attention to character, rather than to person. Thus, if any one would really be first in character, and not merely in person, then, says the Lord, let him be such; but in seeking to be the greatest he will have to be prepared to take the lowest place, that is, the lowest in the estimation of the world.

The original term for "servant" in this text is not the word which is usually rendered *servant*, that is, one's relation as a slave or bond-servant. The word, instead, is the one from which we have the term *deacon*: and the idea which is represented by it is that of *activity*, rather than simply his *relation* as a slave. Thayer says that here the word "is used figuratively of those who advance other's interest even at the sacrifice of their own." This, indeed, is a noble thought. Who would dare say that one who gladly sacrifices his own welfare in order that he may advance the interest of the one to whom he has willingly attached himself is not among the greatest?

This is a lesson that no one should miss. When a person becomes a Christian, he deliberately chooses Christ as his Master, and a pertinent question is, Is he gladly denying himself that he may advance the cause of Christ? (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 4.) This is the very heart of Christianity in its application among men; and what is true of Christ as the leader is also true of one's fellow Christians. This is what the golden text implies. Paul

again says, "In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another." (Rom. 12: 10.) The idea in "preferring one another" is to go before and lead one another in every honorable activity, that is, seek to excel in good deeds for the good of others—set the example and urge others to follow.

And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them: and taking him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. This child may have been a member of the household in which Jesus was, or a nearby neighbor; but at any rate, he was in the place where Jesus and his disciples were at the time of this lesson. The child was placed in the midst of the quarrelling disciples, no doubt, because a child is always the token and symbol of love and trustfulness. Mark alone says that Jesus took the child in his arms, and the lesson which followed was an impressive one.

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of the proper attention to the children in our midst. We must get close to them, if we would enter into their beautiful life and get the lesson which they have to teach us. We cannot do this by standing at a distance, investigating them statistically, or by philosophizing and writing books about them. Draw near to the children, and they will draw near unto you. This is something for church leaders to remember, if they want to get the children interested in the Lord and the way of salvation, as well as to get their lessons of humility and trust which Jesus wants us all to learn.

In saying that whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me, Jesus was laying down the standard by which his disciples were to be measured. It is by this criterion that the spirit of all Christians is to be judged. When anyone receives a person manifesting the spirit of a little child, he receives the Lord himself; and since Christ and the Father are inseparably joined in spirit, those who receive the Son also receive the Father. The opposite

is also true, as may be seen by reading Matt. 18: 5, 6.

An Erroneous View Corrected (Mark 9: 38-43)

John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us. This was John the apostle, the brother of James, and son of Zebedee. Jesus had just used the expression "in my name," and that may have reminded John of the incident about which he spoke. It is not known just who the person was who was casting out demons in the name of Christ, but from the reply of Jesus it is evident that he was a disciple in some sense. He may have been a follower of John the Baptist, or one of the seventy whom Jesus sent out.

John's reason for forbidding him was that he was not one of the immediate followers of Jesus. This incident is taken by many to mean that Christ recognizes the various denominational bodies which claim to be his followers, but that is a mistake. The whole spirit of the New Testament is against sectarianism in any form; and nothing can be right which is contrary to the teaching of the inspired will of God. It is to be feared that in many instances denominations are built up by those who think that they are opposing the system. But in the case now before us, the disciple whom John forbade was himself a disciple of the same Christ that John was; he believed the same things which John did; and was doing the same kind of work which John was doing, according to John's own admission. But denominationalism is wrong in any sense.

But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for vs. This is further proof that the man was a follower of Christ. If the man had been an enemy of Christ, it would have been right to forbid him: but, according to John's own statement, he was casting out demons in the name of Christ, and that proved that he was a friend of the Lord. Only the Lord can give such power to men, and, having received such power, anyone has the right to use

it, or did during the days of miracles.

But for a man to claim to follow the Lord while at the same time rejecting his word, as many do today, is to bring himself under his condemnation. (Cf. John 12: 48-50.) It is not uncommon for people today to proclaim salvation in the name of the Lord, without teaching men to do that which is clearly commanded. This is to despise the word of the Lord. (See Gal. 1: 6-9.) By their fruits ye shall know them. People do not do mighty works in the name of the Lord and then quickly speak evil of him. It is impossible for one to occupy strictly neutral ground with reference to Christ. His influence will preponderate in one way or the other. (Cf. Matt. 12: 30.) Positive opposition is not necessary in order for one to be against Jesus; a failure to act is sufficient.

For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. This describes one of the smallest one of service, but since it is done for one because of his relation to Christ, it thereby honors God; and the one doing it shall certainly receive his reward. (Cf. Matt. 25: 31-46.) But remember, it must be done "because ye are Christ's:" that is the motive behind the deed, and that which makes the act valid.

And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. This very likely refers to the effect which the selfish contentions of the disciples might have on others. Contention as to who is the greatest always gives offense: and by exciting evil passions, both the contenders and the hearers are led into sin.

This should be a lesson to those disciples of Christ who engage in quarrelling among themselves. But as Jesus said concerning offenses, it must needs be that the occasions for them come, for some are not willing to follow the Lord's teaching, "but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!" One should be

made to shudder when he considers that even his speech and conduct, which have no reference to the bystander, may cause him to stumble. This, of course, has reference to speech and conduct which are contrary to the Scriptures. The terrible consequences are stated in the words of the text: "it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea," or, as Matthew has it, "that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." It would be better for this certain and terrible death to come to one, than for him to cause even one of the little ones who believe on Christ to stumble.

And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. The reference here, according to Meyer, Clarke, Vincent, McGarvey, and other eminent commentators, is to "those sins which appear most *pleasing* and *profitable* to us; from which we must be separated, if we desire ever to see the kingdom of God"; and "we are taught that it is better to deny ourselves all the gratification which the indulgence of those desires would give, even if the denial should be as painful as the loss of a limb or an eye, than to suffer the consequences of indulgence." (Read Verses 45-48.)

The whole tenor of the Bible would seem to oppose the idea of literally cutting off one's hand; for it is obvious that the dismemberment of the body would not prevent the sin in question. Why, then, did Jesus employ such strong language? He was evidently seeking to bring home to the hearts of his disciples a sense of the awfulness of causing a weak brother to stumble. His words suggest the general idea of having to make definite, distinct, and sometimes even sharp and sudden sacrifices, in order to oppose sin and remain loyal to Christ. The language of the text, therefore, stands in the most direct and uncompromising opposition to what is the most cherished attitude of the human mind toward sin.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction
How is the desire for greatness related to human nature?

What should be our attitude toward it?
 How did Jesus deal with the question?
 What place does the "worldly have in
 our lives as Christians? Give reasons
 for your answer.
 What is essential worldliness?

The Golden Text

Discuss the setting of this text.
 In what way does love fulfil the law? and
 what law?
 Why does love work no ill to his neigh-
 bor?
 Name the positive and negative workings
 of love as stated by Paul.

A Selfish Dispute

From where did Jesus and the disciples
 return to Capernaum?
 In what way was this city related to Je-
 sus?
 What had the disciples been doing on the
 way to Capernaum?
 How did Jesus come to discuss the matter
 with them?
 Under what circumstances did the dis-
 cussion take place?
 Why would the disciples enter into such
 a dispute with one another?

The Child in the Midst

How did Jesus begin his teaching on this
 occasion?
 What is the first condition of true great-
 ness?
 What is the meaning and significance of
 the term "servant," as used here?

How may this lesson be applied to us?
 Why would Jesus place a little child in the
 midst of the disciples?
 Discuss the importance of the proper at-
 titude toward children.
 In what way is the spirit of the Lord's
 people measured?
 Why does one receive the Father when
 he receives the Son?

An Erroneous View Corrected

What was this erroneous view?
 Does this incident imply that Jesus recog-
 nizes people in all religious bodies as
 being his people? Give reasons for your
 answer.
 Why is denominationalism wrong? Discuss
 fully.
 What proof did Jesus give that the for-
 bidden man was a friend?
 How does one today demonstrate that he
 is a friend of Jesus?
 What does the New Testament teach re-
 garding those who act contrary to the
 Lord's express commandments?
 What is the significance of giving a cup of
 water to a disciple of Christ?
 What did Jesus say regarding the causing
 a little one to stumble?
 What did he mean by a little one?
 Why do such contentions cause offenses?
 Discuss the seriousness of this lesson as it
 respects "quarrelling disciples."
 Does Jesus mean for such people to cut
 off their hands literally? Give reasons
 for your answer.
 Why, then, did Jesus use such strong
 language?

Lesson X—March 6, 1960

THE SANCTITY OF THE HOME

Lesson Text

Mark 10: 2-12

2 And there came unto him Phar-
 i-sees, and asked him, Is it lawful for
 a man to put away *his* wife? trying
 him.

3 And he answered and said unto
 them, What did Mo'-ses command
 you?

4 And they said, Mo'-ses suffered
 to write a bill of divorcement, and
 to put her away.

o But Je'-sus said unto them, For
 your hardness of heart he wrote you
 this commandment.

6 But from the beginning of the
 creation, Male and female made he
 them.

7 For this cause shall a man leave
 his father and mother, and shall
 cleave to his wife;

8 And the two shall become one
 flesh: so that they are no more two,
 but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined
 together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house the disciples
 asked him again of this matter.

11 And he saith unto them, Who-
 soever shall put away his wife, and
 marry another, committeth adultery
 against her:

12 And if she herself shall put
 away her husband, and marry an-
 other, she committeth adultery.

Golden Text.—*"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man
 put asunder"* (Mark 10: 9.)

Devotional Heading.—Gen. 2: 18-25; Matt. 19: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

February 29. M..... Moses' Teaching Concerning the Home (Deut. 24: 1-4)

March 1. T. God Hates Divorce (Mal. 2: 10-16)

March	2. W.....	Sin and Danger of Divorce (Matt. 5: 31, 32)
March	3. T.....	Marriage Bond Binding (Rom. 7: 1-6)
March	4. F.....	Paul Teaches Concerning Marriage (1 Cor. 7: 1-24)
March	5. S.....	Christ and the Church (Eph. 5: 22-33)
March	6. S.....	Peter's Teaching (1 Pet. 3: 1-7)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACES.—The borders of Judaea and beyond the Jordan.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Pharisees.

Introduction

The home, as a unit of society, had its origin in the garden of Eden. "And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. . . . Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2: 18, 24.) The term "meet" is used in the sense of answering to or supplying man's need. Thus, according to the purpose of God, man and woman, or husband and wife, are inseparable, the complements of one another; and they together form in their union the ideal human being.

Jesus set his seal to this divine message when he took the primitive story of Eden to correct even the legislation of Moses (Cf. Matt. 19: 1-9); and he placed the inspiration of this ancient passage beyond all question for the Christian when he incorporated its lesson in his own new law. It was out of this divine instruction which God gave for the purpose of directing the human race that the sanctity of marriage came, and that ideal mystical relation of husband and wife on which all high civilization and permanent progress depend. It is a lesson which has been indelibly written in the forefront of all acceptable religious teaching.

Thus, according to the teaching of Christ, the act of marriage constitutes a divine and unalterable union, since it is God who joins the two together and makes them one. The marriage relation is not primarily a Christian institution, but it has been refined and beautified by the teaching of Jesus. As already noted, it is rooted in the will of the Creator, and any sin against it is a sin against the nature of God himself. And the Creator in building the human social order has ordained that the foundation shall be firmly laid in the union of one man with one woman, and resulting in the creation of other human beings.

The man, the woman, and the child, that is, the husband, the wife, and the offspring, may be spoken of as God's eternal triangle and the base on which the whole vast pyramid of human life is reared. It is a beautiful arrangement whereby the whole body may be fitly framed together, built up, and held together in the bonds of love. Much has been said in our day about the value of modern games in teaching the spirit of team-work; but God anticipated all of that from the beginning, and ordained that every child born into the world should be born into a team, and should learn to cultivate and practice the team spirit from its earliest days.

The Golden Text

This portion of our study will be considered in the lesson text.

The Text Explained

A Question about Divorce (Mark 10: 2-4)

And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him. We learn from the preceding verse that Jesus left Galilee and came into the borders of Judaea and beyond the Jordan; and

from the language used by Mark, it would seem that the journey was a continuous one. But when we read the records of Luke and John, we learn that much of that which is recorded in Luke 9: 51-18: 14; John 7: 2-11: 54 took place on that journey. He did not return to Galilee any more until after his resurrection.

It was characteristic of the Pharisees to seek to entrap Jesus. The possible reason for the effort now before us was due to the fact that Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, had modified the law of Moses. The law of the latter regarding divorce is found in Deut. 24: 1-4. If the husband found some "unseemly thing" in his wife, he could divorce her; and she, in turn, could become the wife of another man. But, according to Jesus, no one could put away a companion and marry another, except for fornication, without being guilty of adultery.

The Pharisees evidently felt that they had a clear case against Jesus, and that he would be wholly unable to free himself from the dilemma into which his teaching had placed him. If he reaffirmed his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, they felt that they could make it appear that he did not respect the law of Moses; but if he endorsed the law of Moses, they then could show that he contradicted his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. In either case, they evidently thought that they could make it appear that he was too inconsistent to be accepted as a teacher of the truth.

And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. It appears that there were two principal schools of thought regarding divorce among the Jews during the days of Jesus. The one advocated by Rabbi Hillel was very liberal, and allowed a man to divorce his wife for practically any cause. Rabbi Shammai, on the other hand, held that only the most serious offenses, such as adultery, were sufficient to justify a man in putting away his wife. But Jesus, in his reply to the Pharisees, ignored these two schools of thought, and directed their minds to the law of Moses; and with their minds on that law, he was in position to present to them the will of God in the matter.

Those who read the parallel account in Matthew will observe that the reference to what Moses taught is approached from two viewpoints. Matthew represents the Pharisees as bringing the question up; while Mark says that Jesus asked them what

Moses taught. If we remember the elliptical nature of both accounts, the apparent difficulty will be somewhat easily resolved. It appears that the Pharisees brought up the question of divorce, and Jesus, according to Mark, asked them what Moses said about it. Their reply was according to Mark's report. Christ then, it seems, stated God's original law regarding the marriage relation; and it was then that the Pharisees asked the question about the reason for the commandment of Moses, as recorded by Matthew.

The Original Purpose Regarding Marriage (Mark 10: 5-9)

But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them. Or, as Matthew has it, "but from the beginning it hath not been so." That is, previous to the law of Moses God did not permit divorce, but when the law was given the moral condition of the people was such that a positive prohibition of divorce would have led to serious consequences, such as promiscuity or the secret assassination of wives who were displeasing to their husbands, or both.

In commenting on this issue, McGarvey says, "And as there was no immutable principle of the divine government involved in tolerating divorce for a time, the privilege was a choice between evils. It was a concession to the hardness of men's hearts, but it was part of a system of adaptations by which at last this hardness would be more effectually overcome. When the gospel was introduced God's chosen time had arrived for bringing this concession to an end, and since then it has been the most daring interference with the divine prerogative for men to venture on a continuance of the same concession, as though they were possessed of divine authority."

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh: so that they are no more two, but one flesh. Instead of endorsing the concession which Moses allowed, Jesus went back to God's original law, which Moses also

recorded, and showed what God's will actually is: 1. Marriage is a fundamental principle of the social order, as ordained by God himself; and it is clearly seen from the fact that he made them male and female. 2. The marriage relation is superior even to the parental relation—"for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." 3. Marriage results in two people becoming one flesh, so that a man is as much joined to his wife as he is to his own body (cf. Eph. 5: 28, 29). And since a man can be separated from his own body only by death, it follows that the marriage relation, according to God's will, can only be dissolved in that way. The conclusion which Christ thus draws shows that no authority on earth can, with God's approval, dissolve the marriage bond, as may be seen from the Lord's next statement.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. A scriptural marriage is the blessing of the lives of two eligible persons of opposite sex into one through (1) mutual agreement on their part, (2) legal contract as authorized by the state, and (3) sexual cohabitation through which God makes them one. Such a union is further confirmed, sealed, and exemplified in the offspring. The two principals thus literally become one flesh; and there is no power which can separate their blood so long as their descendants survive.

Marriage in this sense is a status or condition which, although originating in an agreement, is not capable of being terminated by the couple's repudiation of the agreement. The marriage bond once established is in its nature unalterable. No human law can disannul blood relationships. The son is forever a son, and the daughter always remains a daughter, even though they may be disowned. Brothers and sisters can never cancel at will their relationship with each other. Marriage results in a blood relationship which cannot afterwards be made void. This truth has led some Bible students to conclude that divorce is not permissible, with God's approval, under any circumstances.

Someone has made this very wise

and thought-provoking observation on the permanency of marriage: "There can be no doubt that the divine intention in marriage, manifested in the order of creation and confirmed in the teaching of Christ, is of life-long and indissoluble union. All who enter into this holy estate should clearly realize that they are entering upon a road from which there should be no thought of turning back. It is a union which though formed in love is not dependent upon the fluctuations of sensual desire but is held firm by a moral fidelity which can stand the strain of changeful fortune and will endure when passions cool and desire shall fail. It is a union, moreover, which lays the foundation of the whole social order, and which, if it be broken or brought into contempt, will lead to social disintegration. There is a very grave note of warning in our Lord's words. 'What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' If man interferes with the ordinance of the Creator, be sure he will suffer for it."

Concerning Divorce and Remarriage (Mark 10: 10-13)

And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. It appears that the instruction given in this section of our lesson was heard by the disciples only, although the same thing in substance was said to the Pharisees, as may be gathered from Matt. 19: 9. Some additional teaching which Christ gave the disciples after they went into the house may be found in Matt. 19: 10-12.

And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put a way her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery. In Matt. 5: 32 Jesus said, "But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." Both of these passages together proclaim the interresponsibility which attaches itself to all parties who are involved in unjustified divorce and remarriage. The reason why a husband or wife is guilty of adultery, when marriage follows an improper divorce.

is because in God's sight the first marriage is still binding. It does not appear that the mere fact of divorce, in and of itself, would make the wife an adulteress, any more than the mere look for lustful purposes (Matt. 5: 28) would make a man an actual adulterer, or hate, a murderer (1 John 3: 15); but since Jesus regards the thought as the father of the deed, the husband becomes responsible for what the wife would in all probability do in order to free herself from the humiliating state in which the divorce placed her, namely, enter into another marriage which would be an adulterous union—something she would not have done had she and her first husband remained together.

The question of divorce and re-marriage is a vital issue today among the Lord's people; and since it is a Bible question, it should be carefully considered. Jesus plainly says that only those who do the will of the Lord can be saved. Therefore, for one to attempt to settle such an important question, without consulting the Bible, is to be guilty of ignoring the will of God concerning his people.

God's law on the question now before us was cumulative through the years involved in making his revelation. This point has already been touched upon in calling attention to the two viewpoints stated by Moses and Jesus. Like many other laws, it is both basic and supplementary. God stated his will regarding the marriage union in the beginning of man's life here upon the earth, namely, a union for life; and in the passage now before us, if taken alone, Jesus plainly says that marriage which follows divorce results in adultery. But if the parallel in Matthew is taken into consideration, it is easy to see that there is some kind of a modification—"Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except for fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." What does the exception imply?

If we correctly understand the yearning of Jesus, it appears that the sin of fornication creates a breach in the marriage relationship so grave and far-reaching as to allow the in-

jured party, in the sight of God, the *right* to terminate the contract. It does not appear that the contract is actually broken by the sin in question, but that the injured party has the *right* to terminate it. If the guilty party repents, it is within the province of the injured party to forgive, and the marriage relation therefore may be continued.

From the earliest days of human society the sin of social infidelity has been recognized as the most deadly of all social crimes; for it destroys not only the integrity and happiness of the two involved; but also lays in ruins the home which is the foundation of all society. Furthermore, modern experience has grimly demonstrated that divorce does not correct, but instead positively increases the evils which it seeks to eliminate. The following quotation from Charles Foster Kent is worthy of serious consideration in a study like this.

"Jesus' teachings on this subject do not stand alone, but are an integral part of his practical philosophy of living. These principles, when applied to the problems of life, make his austere position eminently practical. It is the despondent husband or the nerve-racked wife who supremely needs the loyal love and sympathetic help of the one who too often selfishly seeks to escape these obligations through divorce. All the chivalry of Jesus' nature revolted against the craven cowardice and the beastly egoism revealed in an ordinary divorce procedure. He fought it not merely by direct command but by making love the ruling principle in human life and by thus eliminating the causes which lead to divorce. When husband and wife are working whole-heartedly for each other's happiness and highest development, divorce is an impossibility. The limitations and needs of the one tend only to inspire the sympathy and devotion of the other. A marriage consummated and interpreted in accord with Jesus' principle of living is impregnable. But if founded simply on the shifting sands of personal passion and caprice it is in constant danger of only adding to the hideous social wreckage of the divorce courts."

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 the term "home"?
When and where did the home have its origin?
In what sense is the woman "meet" for the man?
What did Jesus say and do about the earliest pronouncement regarding family life?
What did Jesus teach regarding the marriage relationship?
In what sense may the family be spoken of as God's eternal triangle?

A Question about Divorce

Where was Jesus at the time of this lesson? and from where had he come?
What question did the Pharisees ask him? and for what reason?
Discuss the difference between the law of Moses and the teaching of Christ regarding the marriage relation.
What did the Pharisees evidently think that they could do about this?
What were the two principal thoughts regarding divorce in the days of Jesus?
How did Jesus answer the question of the Pharisees?
Give the probable order of the conversation in the light of both Matthew and Mark.

The Original Purpose Regarding Marriage

When did God first permit divorce among his people? and why?
Why not allow divorce because of the hardness of heart now?

Why was it necessary to allow divorces for that purpose in the days of the law of Moses?
What did Jesus show regarding God's will about the marriage relation?
What conclusion did he draw from this? Define a scriptural marriage.
Why can't human law dissolve a valid marriage?
Why is a strict law regarding divorce so essential?

Concerning Divorce and Remarriage

Under what circumstances did the teaching regarding divorce take place?
What did Christ say about the subject?
Why is a person who marries following a divorce guilty of adultery?
In what sense does a man make his divorced wife an adulteress?
Why is it so important to study this subject?
What is meant by saying that God's law regarding marriage was cumulative?
What exception did Christ introduce?
Why would this exception permit a marriage without adultery?
Does the sin of fornication actually break the marriage bond? Give reasons for your answer.
Why is social infidelity such a deadly sin? Does divorce actually solve any real problems? Give reasons for your answer.
How is the Lord's teaching regarding divorce related to his teaching as a whole? Illustrate.
Show how the principles which he laid down are practical for everyday living.
How is the best possible way for a couple to avoid the divorce court?

Lesson XI—March 13, 1960

JESUS DECLARES HIS KINGSHIP

Lesson Text

Mark 11: 1-10

1 And when they draw nigh unto Je-ru'-sa-lem, unto Beth'-pha-ge and Beth'-a-ny, at the mount of Ol'-ives, he sendeth two of his disciples,

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

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

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

5 And certain of them that stood

there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Je'-sus had said: and they let them go.

7 And they bring the colt unto Je'-sus, and cast on him their garments: and he sat upon him.

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

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, Ho'-san'na: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed *is* the kingdom that cometh, *the kingdom* of our father David: Ho'-san'-na in the highest.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power”* (Mark 9: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 5: 9-13.

Daily Bible Readings

March 7. M.	.....	Jesus Hailed as King (Mark 11: 1-10)
March 8.		T. . Ruler of All Nature (Mark 11: 11-14)
March 9. W.	.....	Ruler of the Temple (Mark 11: 15-19)
March 10.		T. Power to Answer Prayer (Mark 11: 20-25)
March 11.		F. Men Question His Power (Mark 11: 27-33)
March 12. S.	.....	King of the Earth (Psalm 2: 1-12)
March 13. S.	.....	Ruler of Heaven (Rev. 5: 9-13)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the disciples, the owners of the colt, and the multitude.

Introduction

Those who read the New Testament are aware of the fact that the Synoptic Gospels are largely occupied with preachings and teachings concerning the kingdom of heaven. John, Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy all emphasized its near approach. The prophets of the Old Testament, more than seven hundred years before this preaching was done, had foretold the coming of the kingdom; and the people of Israel therefore were in great expectancy and were easily moved when the announcement of its near approach was made.

Practically all the Jews, however, were under the impression that Christ would be an earthly king, and it was next to impossible to get that idea out of their minds. After the miracle of feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, John says that “Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.” (John 6: 15.) Even

after the Lord’s resurrection, the apostles who had been the closest to Jesus, said, “Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1: 6b.)

The kingdom of Christ is the spiritual reign of the Messiah, or, what is the same thing, the church of Christ. The Lord was commissioned by his Father to win the world from the domain of Satan; and it was for that reason that he was given all authority in heaven and on earth. (See Matt. 28: 18.) When Jesus stood before Pilate, he said, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John 18: 36.) The kingdom of Christ has always been, and always will be until he turns it back to the Father (see 1 Cor. 15: 24-28), concerned with the salvation of the human race. It has never been, and never will be, a rival of any earthly kingdom.

The Golden Text

“Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. come with power.” In order to get the full significance of the Lord’s statement on this occasion, the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke should also be read. “Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” (Matt. 16: 28.) But I tell you of a

truth, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9: 27.) Mark: “the kingdom of God come with power.” Matthew: “the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” Luke: the kingdom of God.” All three of these expressions refer to the same event, namely, the establishment of the kingdom or reign of Christ.

Just prior to the statement which we have just been considering, Jesus had spoken of his approaching death.

and it would be natural for the disciples to think that if he should die at the hands of his enemies, he would not be able to set up the kingdom which had been promised; and it was evidently because of this feeling on their part that he told them that some of them would live to see him enter formally upon his reign as king. The kingdom was formally established on the following Pentecost. The kingdom came literally, but the coming of Christ was spiritual and providential. The obedience which was rendered by those who received the word of Peter was a living demonstration that the new King was being obeyed.

There are those who claim that Christ did not set up the kingdom as he had planned to do, because the Jews rejected him; and that as a

result of that rejection he established the church instead. These people further claim that the kingdom will not be established until the premillennial coming of Jesus, at which time he will reign upon a literal throne here upon the earth for a thousand years. There are several reasons why this viewpoint is erroneous. 1. Eph. 3: 10, 11 makes it plain that the church was not an afterthought, but was in the eternal purpose of God. 2, Jesus himself, in Mark 8: 31, foretold of his rejection by the Jews before he made the announcement of the coming of the kingdom in the words of the golden text. 3. The New Testament speaks repeatedly of the kingdom of Christ as being in existence in the days of the apostles. (Cf. Col. 1: 13; Heb. 12: 28; Rev. 1: 6, 9.)

The Text Explained

Preparing to Enter the City

(Mark 11: 1-3)

And when they draw nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives. About five months had elapsed since Jesus set out from Galilee with his disciples on this journey. The major part of this time was spent in Peraea, in the Lord's ministry there. It is well to keep in mind that only thirty-eight days of the Lord's entire ministry, exclusive of the forty days of temptation, are covered in Mark's narrative. This is a good place to call attention to several important events in the life of Jesus between this lesson and the last one.

After his discussion of the divorce question, he blessed the little children who were brought unto him, and then followed the episode of the rich young ruler, and the Lord's discussion of the peril of riches. (Matt. 19: 13-30.) Then came the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, the third prediction of his death, the lesson growing out of the ambition of James and John, and the healing of two blind men. (Mark mentions only one—Bartimaeus.) (See Matt. 20: 1-34.)

After healing the blind men, Jesus met Zacchaeus the publican, and went home with him. (Luke 19:1-10.) This was followed by the parable of the pounds (Luke 19: 11-28). After that, he entered into Bethany, and

was entertained in the home of Simon the leper. It was here that Mary anointed him with the costly ointment, and Judas registered his complaints. (John 12: 1-11.) We are now entering the last week of our Lord's earthly life; and as we do so, we can see the storm clouds gathering and preparations being made for the greatest conflict the world has ever known. May God help us to consider carefully these great events!

Their drawing nigh unto Jerusalem, according to John, was on the morrow after the supper in the house of Simon the leper. (See John 12: 12-19.) Bethany, and perhaps Bethphage, were villages on the eastern slope of the mount of Olives. The former was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, but comparatively little is known of the latter. It has been thought by some that *Bethphage* was the name given to the eastern slope of the mount of Olives, and that Bethany was a village within Bethphage. However, the weight of authority favors the idea that they were both villages on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. The mount of Olives, sometimes called "Olivet," was a sabbath day's journey directly east of Jerusalem. (Cf. Acts 1: 12.)

He sendeth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way

into the village that is over against you: and straightway as ye enter into it you shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat; loose him, and bring him. Inasmuch as Jesus probably started from Bethany on his way to Jerusalem, some have thought that the village to which the disciples were sent was Bethphage, but we have no direct information regarding that; and neither are the names of the two disciples given. Matthew says that Jesus told the two disciples that they would "find an ass tied, and a colt with her." Mark, at, usual, is more specific, and mentions only the colt; but both he and Matthew say that Jesus rode upon the colt. It would seem that an animal which had been ridden before would not be suitable for the purpose in hand. (Cf. Num. 19: 2.; Deut. 21: 3.)

Albert Barnes notes that in Judaea there were but few horses, and they were chiefly used in war. Men seldom employed them in the common walks of life, or on ordinary journeys. The ass, the mule, and the camel are still used as a rule in eastern countries. To ride a horse was often the symbol of war, while to ride a mule or an ass was an emblem of peace. It was the custom of kings and princes to ride upon mules, as may be gathered from 1 Kings 1: 33. (Cf. Judges 10: 4; 12: 14; 1 Sam. 25: 20.) Thus it is seen that riding on a mule or an ass did not signify either poverty or degradation, but was the proper manner for a king to ride. It was entirely appropriate, therefore, for the King of Zion (Matt. 21: 5), to enter his capital upon the foal of an ass.

And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither. It would be very natural for a question like this to be asked. It is also quite probable that the owners of the colt either knew Jesus, or knew about him; and as soon as they understood who wanted the colt, they would send it at once.

Some Bible students have thought that the expression, "and straightway he will send him back hither," was a promise on the part of Christ that he would return the colt to its owners, when he had finished with it; but

that seems like a forced interpretation. It is more natural to regard the words as indicating that the owners would send the colt to Jesus as soon as they learned who it was who wanted it. Matthew notes that these things were done in fulfillment of prophecy.

The Colt Secured and Brought to Jesus

(Mark 11: 4-6)

And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door without in the open street; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go. Luke says that it was the owners of the colt who asked the disciples why they were loosing it. Unless the disciples knew the owners, it required a considerable amount of both faith and courage for them to walk up in the presence of strangers, and begin to untie the colt. This is especially true, when we think of the fear which they had for the Jews.

In commenting on the words, "the Lord hath need of him," Dean Charles R. Brown says, "Let the ass stand as a modest representative of the material values of the world. The Lord has need of them all. His purpose for the race can only be achieved as these materials are yielded to him in willing consecration. The farms and the mines, the stores and the shops, the railroads and the steamships, must yield to the mastery of his spirit and be administered with reference to the high ends of human well-being which he held steadily in view. The whole industrial framework of society must be made the subject of a higher consecration, that his will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. He therefore laid his hand upon the bit of property, claiming it for his use and asserting his Kingship in the realm of material values." This, of course, is a moral lesson, but it contains food for thought.

The Triumphal Entry

(Mark 11: 7-10)

And they bring the colt unto Jesus, and cast on him their garments; and he sat upon him. Matthew says that that they "brought the ass, and the colt," while Luke says, *And they*

brought him to Jesus," that is, the colt. Matthew also says that they "put on them their garments; and he sat thereon." This would indicate that they put their garments on both animals; and if they did, it was because they evidently did not know on which he would ride. Mark and Luke mention only the colt. Luke's language is, "and they threw their garments upon the colt, and set Jesus thereon."

And many spread their garments upon the way; and others branches, which they had cut from the fields. The garments were the loose cloaks which were worn over their tunics or shirts. The colt had never been ridden, and it is possible that the garments were meant for a saddle, but more probable, as a token of respect, as in the case of those who spread their garments upon the way. When Jehu was proclaimed king of Israel, the record says, "Then they hastened, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew the trumpet, saying, Jehu is king." (2 Kings 9: 13.)

It is worthy of note that Matthew, Mark and John each used a different word for "branches," and even in the English translation each has a different modifier. "Branches from the trees" (Matthew); "branches, which they had cut from the fields" (Mark) and "branches of the palm trees" (John). Matthew's word is *kladous*, from *klao*, to break; hence a young, tender-shoot, broken off for grafting, a twig as related to a branch. Mark has *stibadas*, from *steibo*, to tread or beat down; hence a mass of straw⁷, rushes, or leaves beaten together or strewn loose, so as to form a bed or carpeted way. John *baia*, strictly palm-branches, the feathery fronds forming the turfed crown of the tree. (See Thayer and Vincent, and compare Liddell and Scott.) Mark's and John's words are not used elsewhere in the New Testament. Matthew's and Mark's branches were strewn in the way, while those of John's were carried in the hands while waving them. All of this began, according to Luke, "at the descent of the mount of Olives."

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the

name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest. This was no small affair, as may be gathered from Matthew's and John's account; and Luke says that "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen." John represents the Pharisees as saying, "Lo, the world is gone after him." Josephus estimates that approximately three million people attended the passover feast.

There must have been a magnificent acclaim as the people cried, and began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen; saying, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke). The term "Hosanna" means O save! or, Save, I pray! The expression, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," is quoted from Psalm 118: 26. The multitudes were evidently shouting bits from the "Great Hallel," or praise psalms (113-118) which were used by the Jews in their national feasts, that is, the passover, Pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles.

The Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom, and occupy the throne of their father David, which had been vacant since the Babylonian captivity. (Cf. Luke 19: 11.) McGarvey observes that it was the exulting thought of national independence and glory that inspired their acclamations; and the same attitude prepared them for the opposite feeling toward Jesus, which was manifested when they found him a prisoner in the hands of the Roman governor.

Edersheim summarizes the significance of this great occasion in these words: "It was no common pageantry; and Christ's public entry into Jerusalem seems so altogether different from—we had almost said inconsistent with—his previous mode of appearance. Evidently the time for the silence so long enjoined had passed, and that for public declaration had come. And such, indeed, this entry was. From the moment of his sending forth the two disciples to his acceptance of the homage of the mul-

titude, and his rebuke of the Pharisees' attempt to arrest it, it must be regarded as designed or approved by him: not only a public assertion of

his Messiahship, but a claim to its national acknowledgment." Jesus, indeed, in the words of the subject of our lesson, declared his kingship.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What emphasis was placed upon the question of the coming kingdom?
What was the general expectation regarding this kingdom?
Why did the people feel this way about it?
What is the meaning of the kingdom of heaven?
What is the nature of this kingdom? and how does it stand related to other kingdoms?

The Golden Text

What was the full significance of the Lord's statement in this text?
What probably caused Christ to mention the subject at this time?
When did the kingdom come? and in what sense?
Did Christ himself come at that time? Give reasons for your answer.
What claim is sometimes made regarding the establishment of the kingdom and the church?
What proof do we have that the church was not established instead of the kingdom?

Preparing to Enter the City

How long was Jesus on the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem? and where did he spend much of that time?
Name some of the important things in the ministry of Jesus which took place just prior to this lesson.
Where were Bethany, Bethphage, and the mount of Olives?

On what mission did Jesus send two of his disciples? and to what place?
Why would Jesus want a mule, or ass, instead of a horse?
What did he say to them by way of anticipation?

The Colt Secured and Brought to Jesus

In what way did the two disciples manifest their faith and courage?
What moral lessons may we learn from this incident? Discuss fully.

The Triumphal Entry

What preparation was made for Jesus to ride the animal?
Why did some cast their garments upon the ass and the colt?
What "branches" did the multitudes obtain? and what uses were made of them? Describe the acclaim which followed.
Why were the people so stirred at this time?
What kingdom were they expecting? Why refer to "our father David"?
What is the meaning of the term "Hoday"?
How could the people change their attitude toward Jesus so easily and quickly? Is it possible for people today to do the same? Give reasons for your answer.
What should be done in order to avoid such a thing?
Contrast the Lord's manner of entering the city this time with his previous visits there.
What evidence do we have that he approved the acclaim which he received?
How long will Christ reign as king?

Lesson XII—March 20, 1960

THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS

Lesson Text

Mark 12: 28-40

28 And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all?

29 Je'-sus answered, The first is, Hear, O Is'-ra-el; The Lord our God, the Lord is one:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

31 The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well

said that he is one; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Je'-sus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

35 And Je'-sus answered and said, as he taught in the temple. How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David?

36 David himself said in the Holy Spirit,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the foot-
stool of thy feet.

37 David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 And in his teaching he said, Be-

ware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and *to have* salutations in the marketplaces,

39 And chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts:

40 They that devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"There is none other commandment greater than these"*
(Mark 12: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Rom. 13: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

March	14.	M.	.....	Jesus and His Adversaries (Mark 12: 1-12)
March	15.	T.	.....	Answering His Enemies (Mark 12: 13-17)
March	16.	W.	.....	Dealing with Sadducees (Mark 12: 18-27)
March	17.	T.	.....	Answering the Scribes (Mark 12: 28-34)
March	18.	F.	.....	Condemning Hypocrisy (Mark 12: 35-44)
March	19.	S.	.....	Security in God (Psalm 37: 1-11)
March	20.	S.	.....	Fulfilling the Law (Gal. 6: 1-10)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—The temple in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, a scribe, and the people in the temple,

Introduction

The lesson for today is a continuation of the events in the final week of the Lord's life before the cross. This might be called the day of controversy in the temple, when the enemies of Christ among the ruling classes of the Jews came upon him with hostile questions. Their motive was to catch him in his answers and find some legal grounds for accusation against him, so that they might discredit him with the people, many of whom were eager listeners. One group after another came from the Sanhedrin, men learned in the law, acute in debate, specious in argument, and ready to take advantage of any opening which they might find. All of this from the highest tribunal of the Jews, against a poor Galilean peasant, the son of a village carpenter, and himself of the same trade!

Nothing in the experience of Jesus, as his public ministry drew to a close, demonstrates more clearly the power which he possessed, and the wide influence in the land of the Jews which that power had brought to him. And nothing shows more clearly the deteriorating effects of selfishness and worldly pride; for these adversaries of Jesus were seeking that which they called truth by

trying to convict their opponent of error. They did not rejoice in the healing ministry of Christ, but only attempted to destroy the Healer; and in this they were in the employ, not of life, but of death: they were servants, not of God, but of the devil. This was the depth to which the chosen people of God had fallen. Is it any wonder, therefore, that it was necessary for God to send his Son to redeem the world from sin?

Only Jesus could have summed up the statutes of the Old Testament as fealty to God and equity to man; and the two commandments which he selected as the greatest lie quite hidden and widely separated in the books of the law of Moses—Duet. 6: 4, 5 and Lev. 19: 18b. Christ, for the first time in the world's history, drew these two commandments together, and declared that they are inseparable. Religion and morality must go hand in hand; for it is impossible for one to love God, without loving his fellow men. (Cf. 1 John 4: 20, 21.) One's love for man springs from his love for God; and his love for God issues forth in his love for man.

There are many people in our day who would gladly accept the ethics

of Jesus without his religion. They are willing to take him for their example; but we no sooner come to any honest endeavor to imitate him than we discover that we must begin further back than with his outward acts. His life and teaching cannot be separated from those deep-seated religious convictions which made him

the Being that he is. His ethics are so completely interwoven with his religion as to make it impossible for one to have one without the other. He always lived in the presence of God, and the strength and gladness which came from that fellowship colored all of his thoughts, and words, and actions. (Cf. John 5: 30; 8: 29.)

The Golden Text

This portion of our study will be considered in the lesson text.

The Text Explained

A Question about the Great Commandment

(Mark 12: 28-34)

And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? Matthew notes that a group of Pharisees gathered themselves together, after hearing that Jesus had put to silence the Sadducees, and that one of their number, a lawyer, asked his a question, trying him. But Mark, following his usual custom of selecting an individual from a number of actors, saying nothing of the group, mentions only the one asking the question.

A short time before this the Pharisees, along with the Herodians, had tried to catch Jesus in his talk, when they asked him whether or not it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar. But Jesus immediately perceived their duplicity, and asked them to bring him a piece of the tribute money; and when he received it he asked them, "Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at him." And, as Matthew says, they "left him, and went away."

The next to try their hands at trapping Jesus were the Sadducees, the traditional opponents of the Pharisees, and their plan was to ask him one of their stock questions regarding the resurrection; and they were evidently certain that he could not give an answer which would be consistent with the doctrine of the resurrection. The Pharisees had tried to involve Jesus in a dilemma re-

garding the tribute money, but the Sadducees apparently intended to go a step further and involve not only Jesus in such a situation, but God too. But before answering their question, Jesus revealed to them the root of their trouble. "Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God?" He then showed them what the word of God says, and his answer was sufficient to put them to silence, as Matthew notes. This crushing defeat of the Sadducees elated the Pharisees, and they evidently felt themselves sufficiently recovered to make another effort to entrap Jesus.

Many Bible students, such as Meyer, Vincent, Thayer, et al, think that the question regarding the great commandment should read, "What kind of a commandment is great in the law?" Both the Authorized and the Revised Versions, in their opinion, have missed the point in this question. Vincent comments as follows: "That is, what kind of a commandment must it be to constitute a great one? Not, which commandment is greatest as compared with others. The scribes declared that there were 248 affirmative precepts, as many as the members of the human body; and 365 negative precepts, as many as the days of the year; the total being 613, the number of letters in the Decalogue. Of these they called some *light* and some *heavy*. Some thought that the law about the fringes on the garments was the greatest; some that the omission of washing was as bad as homicide; some that the third commandment was the greatest. It was in view of this kind of distinction that the scribe asked the question: not as desiring a declaration as to which commandment was greatest, but as wanting to know the *principle*

upon which a commandment was to be regarded as a *great* commandment." Thayer: "Of what sort or nature."

Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The emphasis here is the unity of Jehovah in contrast with the idolatrous practice of the Gentile world. "This," according to Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, "every devout Jew recited twice every day, and the Jews do it to this day; thus keeping up the great ancient national protest against the polytheism and pantheism of the heathen world: it is the great utterance of the national faith in One Living and Personal God."

The words heart, soul, mind, and strength are not intended to define, but rather to emphasize, that is, to show that true religion is not the isolated allegiance of simply a part of our nature, but the consecration of all the powers of our being and of every relation of our lives. "Religion, as interpreted by Jesus, summons into its service all the manifold powers and activities of our being—the affections of the heart, the aspirations of the soul, the energies of the mind, the strength of the will; it seeks to gather up our feelings, thoughts, and will into one great commanding passion for God." Someone has said that it does not take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him. Carlyle, in writing of his father, said that he was religious with the consent of his whole faculties.

The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. The term "neighbor" is one of the words to which the gospel has imparted a broader and deeper sense, and it was Jesus himself who gave the word its true meaning, so far as his people are concerned. (See Luke 10: 25-37.) When one loves his neighbor (fellow man) as his own self, he will seek that which is best for him.

Matthew represents Jesus as saying that on these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets. There can be no higher prin-

ciple upon which a commandment can rest that fealty to God and equity to man; and it is for that reason that no commandment can be greater than these.

And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. The chief wonder, so far as many of the Pharisees were concerned, was regarding the source of the Lord's knowledge, since he had apparently never attended any of the schools of the rabbis. (Cf. John 7: 15.) The two commandments which he cited as being the greatest were not of the Decalogue, and it would not be expected that one, who was not himself a lawyer, would be able to make such discriminations. Even this lawyer did not try to improve upon the Lord's answer. The parable of the good Samaritan and other scriptures clearly show that the scribes and Pharisees had been neglecting this portion of the Lord's reply; and the fact that this scribe accepted it makes it all the more notable.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. This man, unlike many of the scribes of his day, not only understood that which Jesus said, but was ready to confess that he was speaking the truth. The experience of this man is not commonly enough recognized. We are all too ready to divide people into only two specific classes: black and white, good and evil, successful or a failure, sick or well, etc., etc. But that does not represent real life; for life is mainly made up of the not fars, the almoses, the nearly rights, the not quites, the almost successful, and the like. The scribe in question was typical of many of our day; they are near the border-line of the kingdom of Christ.

And no man after that durst ask him any question. The "no man" probably had reference to the Pharisees and Sadducees who had been trying to entangle the Lord in his speech. Each of their attempts had

resulted in utter defeat, or, as in this case, in being compelled to admit that Jesus was speaking the truth. It appears that nothing is implied here regarding those who would ask questions for the purpose of receiving information.

A Question about the Son of David (Mark 12: 35-37)

And Jesus answered and said, as he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son? Now that the adversaries of Jesus had been silenced, he turned upon them with a counter-question. The Lord's critics had endeavored to expose his lack of knowledge and wisdom; but having failed in that, it was now his turn to teach them the truth. It is well to note that the question which Jesus asked was free from any effort at retaliation.

Jesus quoted from the One Hundredth and Tenth Psalm, a psalm which is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any other part of the Old Testament. It was generally acknowledged to be a Messianic prophecy. The first "Lord" refers to Jehovah, and the second to Christ. (Cf. Matt. 22:41-45 for a different arrangement of the questions now before us.)

The Pharisees suppose that the Christ would be only a man; they did not believe that he would be both God and man. The point in the question is that it would be inconsistent on David's part to call him Lord, if he was only his son, and not both human and divine. It was following this question that Matthew says that "no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." (Cf. Luke 20: 41-44.)

And the common people heard him gladly. The reference here is not to class distinction, but rather to the great mass of people. The marginal reading is *the great multitude*. The leaders, by all their questions and efforts to entangle Jesus, had not been able to weaken the public confidence which Jesus enjoyed as a teacher.

The Ostentation of the Scribes Condemned (Mark 12: 38-40)

And in his teaching he said, Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the marketplaces, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts: they that devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation. In this section Mark records only one sentence from a speech which fills the first thirty-six verses of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Luke treats the subject in the same way, making the same quotation almost verbatim.

The scribes were the religious leaders and teachers of the people, and the words of Jesus on this occasion must have seemed strange to them. It would be as if someone today should say. Beware of the preachers! It is right, of course, for people to listen to preachers; for their work is one of the methods which God has ordained to get his message before them; but the people are not thereby relieved of the responsibility of "searching the scriptures" for themselves. (Cf. Acts 17: 11, 12.)

The men about whom Jesus spoke delighted to clothe themselves in the professional robes which were worn by kings and priests. The salutations in the marketplaces were especially pleasing to them; because there the largest number of people would observe the honors which were paid them. Peloubet notes that eastern greetings excel in formality. They are long and elaborate, with many bows and inquiries regarding the health of all relatives, and with the most profound protestations of personal unworthiness and of the high worth of the person addressed.

The chief seats in the synagogues were the ones which were reserved for the elders, and were, according to some Bible students, placed in front of the ark or chest containing the books of the law. These seats were arranged in an elevated position, and those who occupied them sat with their faces toward the audience. We are told that the common arrangement at feasts was to place the couches on which the diners reclined in a hollow square, with the low

tables in front of the guests, and with one side of the square being left open for the entrance and exit of the servants. There were three couches on each side, and of these the center couch was the most honorable.

These pretenders took advantage of widows in their helpless condition and confiding nature, probably under the pretext of guardians or administrators of estates, and defrauding them obtained possession of their property. This practice has not altogether ceased yet. And in order

to keep down any suspicion, they made long prayers. This practice would have the tendency to keep up the appearance of piety which did not exist. There is hardly anything more disgusting than to see such a hypocrite taking an active part in the work of the church. But such bold pretence is just more evidence of their depraved condition. (Cf. Eph. 4: 19.) The condemnation of such people will be greater because their wickedness is greater. Their dishonesty and love for money would condemn them; but they added to them the sin of hypocrisy.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What characterized the Lord's ministry on the day of this lesson?
What two things did the events of the day demonstrate?
What was significant regarding the Lord's summary of the law?
What is the difference between religion and ethics?
Why do so many people show a willingness to accept the one, and reject the other?
What is always necessary when one accepts Jesus?

A Question about the Great Commandment

Who asked this question and under what circumstances?
What effort had the Pharisees made to entrap Jesus?
When they failed, what did the Sadducees try?
What did the scribe mean by what commandment is first of all?
How had the Jewish scribes regarded the Old Testament commandments?
Which commandment did Christ cite first? and why?
What did this commandment emphasize?
What is meant by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength?
What was the second commandment cited?
How were these two commandments related to the law and the prophets?
What was the reaction of the scribe who asked the question?
What did Jesus say to him?
In what sense was he not far from the kingdom of God?

What mistake do we usually make in classifying people?
What is the real situation in average life?
What effect did the answer of Jesus have on his critics? Why?

A Question about the Son of David

What question did Jesus ask about the son of David?
What was his attitude toward those who had tried to expose him?
From what part of the Old Testament did Jesus quote and why?
How was that psalm generally regarded by the teachers of that day?
What was the point in the question which Jesus asked about the son of David?
Who were the common people? and why did they so readily listen to Jesus?

The Ostentation of the Scribes Condemned

What all did Jesus condemn in the scribes and Pharisees on this occasion?
What must have been their reaction to the words of Christ?
What responsibility do people have toward their teachers and toward themselves?
Why did the scribes want to wear long robes and receive greeting in the marketplaces?
What were the chief seats in the synagogues?
Describe the arrangement for a feast and point out the chief seats.
In what way did these pretenders take advantage of widows?
Why did they make long prayers?
Why would they receive greater condemnation?
How does hypocrisy affect the sins of people?
Do these things have an application in our modern life? Explain.

Lesson XIII—March 27, 1960

THE GREAT COMMISSION BY MARK

Lesson Text

Mark 16: 9-11, 14-20

9 Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared

first to Mary Mag-da-le'-ne, from whom he had cast out seven demons.

10 She went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved.

14 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.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that dis-

believeth shall be condemned.

17 And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 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.

19 So then the Lord Je'-sus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. A-men'.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned"*(Mark 16: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 19: 7-14.

Daily Bible Readings

March 21. M.	Matthew's Report of the Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20)
March 22. T.....	Luke's Report of the Commission (Luke 4: 36, 47)
March 23. W.	..... Commission Being Preached (Acts 2: 14-47)
March 24. T.	Conversion Under the Commission (Acts 8: 35-40)
March 25. F.	Example of Non-conversion (Acts 24: 24-27)
March 26. S.....	Word to Be Preached (Acts 8: 1-8)
March 27. S.	Power in the Word (Rom. 1: 13-17)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and the eleven disciples.

Introduction

The first three gospel narratives contain all the details of the worldwide commission, in so far as it relates to people today. (See Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 46, 47.) It is very probable that Jesus spoke often of this commission during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension; and there can be but little doubt that the three writers already referred to recorded different phases of the charge which were stated by the Lord on different occasions. The full commission is not recorded in any one place in the New Testament.

Any proper study of the great commission must be made in the spirit of Paul's injunction to Timothy to handle aright the word of truth (2 Tim. 2: 15); and when that is done it will be seen that there is nothing contradictory in the various statements which are made regarding it. Each statement is simply supplementary to the others; and when

one searches the scriptures as the Lord expects him to do, he will learn the full will of the Lord as it is contained in his final charge to his disciples, a charge which is applicable to all his people throughout the time of his reign as king. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 2; Gal. 1: 6-9.)

Enough has been said already to show that no one can learn the full will of God by considering only a part of that which he said; but there is, of course, nothing improper about studying each separate statement independently. Our study for this quarter has been confined to the Book of Mark; and the final lesson in the quarter has to do with the Lord's final charge to his apostles. But even in the study of Mark's account of the great commission, we shall have frequent occasion to refer to what other writers have recorded regarding the instructions which Jesus gave to guide his people in their efforts to help him win the world for God.

The Golden Text

Inasmuch as the golden text for today is found in the body of the passage which we are to study, com-

ments on it will be withheld until it is reached in regular order.

The Text Explained

The Appearance to Mary Magdalene

(Mark 16: 9-11)

Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved.

Many able Bible critics have long regarded the last twelve verses of the chapter from which our lesson is taken as being the product of a hand other than Mark's. (See marginal note.) There is no doubt about the historical correctness of the representations of these verses, but only their genuineness as a part of Mark's original manuscript. Professor McGarvey appended a paper on the "*Genuineness of Mark 16: 9-20*" to his commentary on Mark; and the interested student can find a summary of the principal arguments on both sides of the question in that able document. His closing paragraph is as follows: "Our final conclusion is, that the passage in question is authentic in all its details, and that there is no reason to doubt that it was written by the same hand which indited the preceding parts of this narrative. The objections which have been raised against it are better calculated to shake our confidence in Biblical Criticism than in the genuineness of this inestimable portion of the word of God."

The Lord's appearance to Mary Magdalene, according to Mark, should be read and studied in the light of the fuller account of John (20: 11-8). Mary came to the tomb with some other women (Matt. 28: 1-10; Luke 24: 1-11); and when they saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the sepulchre, and had received the message of the angel, they ran to tell the apostles this startling, but good news. Mary Magdalene either followed Peter and John back to the tomb, or went by herself; for she was, at the time of

the Lord's appearance to her, standing without the tomb weeping. The other women and the two apostles had evidently returned to their places, and only Mary was in the garden when Jesus appeared to her. This was the first of the Lord's appearances after his resurrection.

Most of the information we have regarding Mary Magdalene is given in connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Only two other things are said about her in the inspired record: (1) The Lord cast seven demons out of her; and (2) she was one of the women who followed Jesus and ministered unto him of their substance. (See Mark 15: 40, 41; Luke 8: 1-3.)

The term "Magdalene" means a woman of Magdala, and implies that she lived in the town of Magdala, on the western shore of the sea of Galilee, not far from Capernaum. It is possible that Jesus met her in her home town, or in Capernaum; and he bound her to himself in bonds of everlasting gratitude by casting out the seven demons. The fact that the demons abode in her was a terrible calamity, but it implied nothing derogatory regarding her character. Furthermore, there is nothing in the gospel records to justify the popular opinion that she was a wicked woman, such as a harlot. There is no foundation in fact for the supposition that she was the woman of Luke 7: 37, 38. In commenting on her character, McGarvey says,

"In reality, all of the indications of her character and position which are furnished by the Scriptures point to a woman in easy circumstances, with a benevolent disposition, tender sensibilities, and commanding influence. Her name stands first among the female attendants of Jesus at almost every mention of it, and on her he conferred the peculiar honor of making her the first human witness of his resurrection from the dead. It is a shame on the Christian world, that a woman of virtue so

pre-eminent has come to be commonly regarded as a reformed harlot; and that her cognomen which served only to distinguish her from other Marys by indicating her birthplace, has become, in the contracted form of Magdalen, the name of societies and institutions for the reformation of abandoned women. This is an illustration, however, of the corrupting and degrading tendency of human tradition when it dares to tamper with the sacred narratives. It is Rome that has given Mary the false and low repute in which she is erroneously held. (See Smith's Dictionary.)"

The fact that the disciples did not believe Mary's report regarding the Lord's resurrection strongly implies that they did not expect it; and it furnishes the strongest possible evidence that the narrative is true. It is a glorious thing that the Lord's resurrection did not, and does not now, depend upon the faith of men regarding it.

The Appearance to the Eleven and the Commission Given (Mark 16: 14-18)

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. It is generally thought by Bible students that this appearance was the same as that recorded in Luke 24: 36-42; John 20: 19-23. It was at this meeting that Jesus asked for food and ate it in order to convince the disciples that he was not a spirit. He also gave the commission, as recorded by John.

This seems to have been the fifth appearance of Christ. In addition to his appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden where the tomb was, he appeared to the other women (Matt. 28: 8, 9); to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-31); to Peter (Luke 24: 34; 1 Cor. 15: 5); and now to the disciples in a group. We know from John 20: 24 that Thomas, one of the apostles, was not present when Christ appeared on the fifth occasion; and since Mark says that he appeared to "the eleven," there is a possibility that the appearance of Mark is the same that in John 20: 26-29, but hardly

probable. Thomas is called "one of the twelve," but there were only eleven. It seems therefore that the terms "eleven" and "twelve" were used as official designations, rather than to indicate the exact number.

To "upbraid" means to rebuke or reproach. This was done because they had refused to believe the testimony of those who had been commissioned to tell them. This is conclusive proof that they did not conspire to impose the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ upon the world. The two disciples who were on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13ff; Mark 16: 12, 13) seem to have expressed the general feeling of the apostles, when they said, "But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel." When he died, that hope vanished, and it was not revived until the testimony had become so strong that they could no longer deny it. Peter speaks of the renewal of this hope, based on the truth rather than on a faulty premise, when he wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1: 3.)

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. As one reads the paragraph beginning with verse 14, it would not occur to him that Jesus did not give this commission at the time he met with the disciples at meat, and upbraided them because of their unbelief; but when the next paragraph, verses 19 and 20, is read, it seems almost certain that verses 15-18 were spoken by the Lord on the day of his ascension. But, as McGarvey notes, this is only one among many instances in which details not essential to an understanding of the chief thought to be conveyed, are omitted from one narrative, but found in another. (Cf. Acts 1: 3.)

We are told in Heb. 2: 9 that Jesus tasted death for every man, and both Paul (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4) and Peter (2 Pet. 3: 9) make it plain that God wants every person to be saved. These are the reasons why Christ commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to the whole creation, and it is both interesting and encouraging to read that very thing was done

within the short period of approximately thirty years. (See Col. 1: 23.)

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. This statement is plain enough to be understood without comment, if people would only listen to the inspired penman, rather than to those who insist that baptism is not a condition of salvation. The principal thought in the statement is, "He shall be saved"; but when we ask, what "he" shall be saved? the answer is clear and unmistakable, he "that believeth and is baptized." If someone should say, "He that believeth and is baptized shall receive five thousand dollars," no one would misunderstand it; and we are, in the fear of God, compelled to say that people do not *misunderstand* that which Jesus said: they just don't believe it.

When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he began his epistle with a ringing statement regarding the proper attitude toward the gospel. (See Gal. 1: 6-9.) Goodspeed renders verses 6 and 7 in these words: "I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by the mercy of Christ, to some different good news—not that there is any other, only that there are some people who are trying to unsettle you and want to turn the good news of the Christ around." This is exactly what is being done today, as may be seen by comparing the commission as given by Christ in the text now before us, with the present-day teaching of men.

Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Or, to express the same thing in algebraic terms, belief plus baptism equals salvation. But what have men said about this? "He that believeth is saved. He may be baptized later, if he so desires; but he is saved before and without water baptism." This, in algebraic terms, reads as follows: "Belief minus baptism equals salvation!" The terrible consequences which will follow the changing of God's order may be seen by reading Gal. 1: 8, 9. (Cf. 1 Pet. 4: 11; 2 John 9.) It is a fact worthy of note that no man in New Testament times, after the commission was given, ever

rejoiced because of the forgiveness of his sins until after he was baptized. (Cf. Acts 8: 39; 16: 34.) This was because salvation was promised to the baptized penitent believer; and when the Lord's conditions were met, the obedient believer had reason to rejoice. Another thing: when baptism and salvation are mentioned in the same passage, baptism always precedes salvation. (Cf. Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 36-38; 22: 16; 1 Pet. 3: 21.)

Baptism is an act of faith. No one is ever scripturally baptized who is not a believer. "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.) So when Christ tells the fate of the disbeliever, it is not necessary to say, "He that disbelieveth *and is not baptized* shall be condemned;" for disbelief alone is sufficient to condemn a man. "He that believeth on him is not judged (condemned): he that believeth not hath been judged (condemned) already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3: 18; cf. verse 36.) This last verse shows that faith includes obedience. (Cf. James 2: 14-26; 2 Thess. 1: 6-9.)

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. There are those who contend that this passage teaches that every believer in Christ would have the power to perform the miracles mentioned in these two verses. That, however, is not what the passage says.

The original word for "accompany" (or "follow," King James Version) is *parakolouthēō*, and its metaphorical meaning, according to Thayer, is "to be always present, to attend one wherever he goes." It was never necessary for every individual believer to have miraculous power for this to be true. *Living Oracles* renders the passage in these words: "And these miraculous powers shall attend the believers: . . .

The idea contained in the passage

is this: The gospel would be preached wherever obedient believers were; and since it was God's will that the gospel message be confirmed, there would always be those available who had miraculous power, and who could confirm the word of God. This, of course, was limited to the age of miracles; for when the word of God had been duly confirmed, there would be no further need for such signs. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-16.)

The Ascension
(Mark 16: 19, 20)

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. The Lord's earthly work had been finished, and now, in the presence of his chosen ambassadors (2 Cor. 5: 18-20), he goes back to his Father to take his seat at his right hand as prophet, priest, and king, where "he must

"reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet"; and in God's own good time he "shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him unto salvation." May God bless us and help us to be ready for that great day!

And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen. Mark, the briefest of the gospel narrators, passes over the work which was done in Jerusalem, beginning with Pentecost; and in one short statement covers, as it were, the entire world. The great salvation which they preached was first spoken through the Lord, and "was confirmed unto us by them that heard; 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." (See Heb. 2: 1-4.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Where are the principal details of the great commission found?
What is the only proper method to study that great charge?
To whom is this commission applicable and for how long?
Snow that a consideration of Mark's record of the commission is a fitting climax for our studies in this quarter.

The Appearance of Mary Magdalene

Why do many Bible students question the genuineness of Mark 16: 9-20?
Would the truthfulness of the message of the passage be affected, if they could prove their point? Give reasons for your answer.
Give the facts regarding the Lord's appearance to Mary Magdalene.
What information do we have in the New Testament regarding her?
Where was her home? and why was she so devoted to Jesus?
Why has her character been called in question?
What great honor did the Lord confer upon her?

The Appearance to the Eleven and the Commission Given

When and under what circumstance did this appearance take place?
How many times had Christ appeared to his disciples up to this time?
Why were the apostles so slow in believing in the resurrection of Jesus?
When did Christ give the commission as stated by Mark?
Why did the Lord want to commission his

disciples for this great work? Discuss fully.
How successful were they in accomplishing their task?
What are the fundamental facts in this commission?
Show that the wording of it is easy to understand.
What caution did Paul give the Galatians regarding it?
How have men sought "to turn the good news of the Christ around"?
When did the people in New Testament times rejoice because their sins were forgiven? Cite and discuss some examples.
When baptism and salvation are mentioned together, how are they always related?
Why didn't the Lord say, "But he that disbelieveth and is not baptized shall be condemned"?
What does saving faith always include? Give proof for your answer.
What did Jesus mean by saying that certain signs would accompany the believers?
Was that promise literally fulfilled? Give reasons for your answer.
How long did miracles last? and why not have them today?

The Ascension

Why did Jesus return to his Father?
What is he doing now? and how long will that continue?
Under what circumstances will he return?
What did the disciples do after Jesus left them?
Where did they preach? and what assistance did they have?
In what way does God help his people now? (Cf. Matt. 28: 20.)
State some of the benefits you have received from the study of Mark.

SECOND QUARTER

STUDIES IN LUKE

Aim.—To study carefully selections from the Gospel according to Luke; to note especially the love, sympathy, and understanding of Jesus in the trials and difficulties of life; and to increase our knowledge, zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ.

Lesson I—April 3, 1960

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Lesson Text

Luke 1s 8-17, 57, 80

8 Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And Zach-a-ri'-as was troubled when he saw *him*, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zach-a-ri'-as: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife E-lis'-a-beth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Is'-ra-el shall he turn unto the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of E-li'-jah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient *to walk* in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared *for him*.

57 Now E-lis-a-beth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Is'-ra-el.

Golden Text.—*"Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways."* (Luke 1: 76.)

Devotional Heading.—Luke 1: 68-79.

Daily Bible Readings

- March 28. M. The Prophet's Message (Isa. 40: 3-5)
- March 29. T. The Angel's Message (Luke 1: 5-7)
- March 30. W. A Mother's Song (Luke 1: 46-56)
- March 31. T. A Mother's Joy (Luke 1: 57-66)
- April 1. F. A Christian Home (Col. 3: 17-25)
- April 2. S. A Mother's Dedication (1 Sam. 1: 21-28)
- April 3. S. Zacharias' Prophecy (Luke 1: 68-79)

Time.—Probably about 4 B.C.

Places.—The temple and the home of Zacharias.

Persons.—The angel, Zacharias, Elisabeth, and John.

Introduction

Luke is referred to in the New Testament as "the beloved physician" (Col. 4: 14), an epithet which implied his popularity as a Christian

gentleman, as well as his competency as a human benefactor. It is very probable that he was better educated, as that term is usually understood,

than any of the four gospel writers. The fact that he was a Gentile (and thought by many to have been the brother of Titus), and wrote especially for Gentiles, will help to explain some of the prime differences between his record, and those of the other three. Ledlow notes that he was interested in human disease, both physical and spiritual, and that he interpreted Christ as a physician, the equal of whom the world has never known. As Luke saw it, Jesus could penetrate the human soul, cleanse the heart, and remove the disease which the ordinary man could not even detect. Jesus Christ therefore was the world's Redeemer, and not merely the Jewish king.

Inasmuch as Luke looked at Jesus from the cosmopolitan, rather than from the national viewpoint, it was natural for him to emphasize the Lord's sympathy for the Gentiles, as well as for the Jews, and the favors which he showed them. Matthew, writing primarily for the Jews, traced the genealogy of Jesus back only as far as Abraham; but Luke, with the Gentiles also in mind, went all the way back to Adam, or the beginning of the human race. It is also interesting to note that only Luke mentions the birth of John the Baptist. John was a man of thirty years, and engaged in the work he was sent to do, when we first meet him in the other three records.

Luke gives us some idea of the way he went about writing his record of the gospel. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning these matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, *having traced the course of all things accurately from the first*, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed." (Luke 1:1-4.)

It appears that in matters which were purely historical, Luke relied upon his natural ability and training. But this in no sense detracted from the inspiration of the record he wrote; for inspiration does not imply that the writers were lifted altogether above their contemporaries in matters of secular import. Marvelous as is their historical accuracy, it does not imply supernatural infusion of knowledge on subjects lying within their own observation. They were the faithful witnesses and recorders of the things which they themselves had seen and heard; or, as in the case of Luke, the things which they had accurately traced out. But in things pertaining to God's will for his people, direct revelation was essential. (Cf. John 14: 26; 16: 13; 1 Cor. 2: 13.)

The Golden Text

"Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways" The mission of John was foretold by the Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah and Malachi. "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." (Isa. 40: 3-5.) "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." (Mal. 3: 1.)

The figure of one preparing a way through the mountains, hills, and valleys was based on the custom of that day. Isaiah compared John to the men who levelled the hills and mountains, and filled up the valleys and low places, so that the road which they prepared would be level throughout, as well as straight; for even the crooked places had to be straightened out. There is a possibility that Malachi pictures, in addition to road building, the idea of a messenger sent onto a road to run before the king to drive away lurking highwaymen, and to announce the arrival of the lord. We know that all of this was done by John in the course of his work.

The people of Israel had departed

from the way the Lord had ordained for them; and that made it necessary for someone to be sent in advance of the Lord's coming in order to get the people in a mood to receive him. If this had not been done, the proba-

bility is that Jesus would have been killed by the Jews long before he was put to death. Luke speaks at length of the work of John in preparing the way for Jesus, as may be seen by reading Luke 3: 1-14.

The Text Explained

The Birth of John Foretold

(Luke 1: 8-17)

Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. The "he" here refers to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. The preceding paragraph of Luke 1 gives some idea of the character of John's parents. "There was in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years."

We learn from 1 Chron. 24: 1-19 that David divided the priests into twenty-four courses. The course of Abijah, the one to which Zacharias belonged, was the eighth. (See 1 Chron. 24: 10.) Each course served one week in the temple. As the number of priests multiplied through the years, it became necessary to draw lots to determine the order of the ministry of the day. According to Edersheim, Vincent, et al, four such lots were drawn each day: the first, before day-break, to designate the priests who were to cleanse the altar and prepare its fires; the second for the priest who was to offer the sacrifices and cleanse the candlestick and the altar of incense; the third for the priest who should burn the incense; and the fourth for those who were to lay the sacrifice and meat-offering upon the altar, and pour out the drink-offering. It was estimated, by Josephus, et al, that there were twenty thousand officiating priests at the time of this lesson; and that only once in a lifetime might any one priest have the exalted privilege of burning incense,

which was considered the most solemn part of the day's service.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. The incense was a symbol of prayer (cf. Psalm 141: 1, 2; Rev. 5: 8; 8: 3), and was offered twice daily (Ex. 30: 1-8), morning and evening. We would gather from Acts 3: 1 that the morning hour was at 9 o'clock, while the evening hour was probably 3 o'clock. We are not told at what hour Zacharias was burning incense at the time of this lesson. The altar of incense was before the veil which separated it from the Most Holy Place; and while the priest was burning the incense, the people were on the outside praying.

According to *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, profound silence was observed by the congregation as they prayed, and at the signal of the presiding priest the one officiating at the altar cast the incense into the fire, and then bowing reverently toward the Holy of Holies, retired slowly backwards, not prolonging his prayers lest he should alarm the congregation, or cause them to fear that he had been slain for offering unworthily. (Cf. Lev. 10: 1-7.) When the priest came out of the temple he pronounced the blessings of Num. 6: 24-26 upon the people, and the Levites burst forth into song, accompanied by the full swell of the temple music. See *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 1136.

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. The student should have in mind a mental picture and a working knowledge of the Old Testament tabernacle, and the temple which later replaced it. The three things about them to keep in mind are the outer court, the holy, and the most holy places, where, in addition to the altar of incense, also known as the golden altar, were the table of showbread and the golden candlestick. Zacharias was probably facing the

west as he stood before the altar; and if so, the angel would be standing on the south side of the altar. It is interesting to note the number of times Luke mentions angels in his two-volume history—*Luke and Acts*. (Cf. Heb. 1: 13, 14.)

And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. The appearance of angels, when they were recognized as such (cf. Heb. 13: 1), had always brought fear to the viewers (see Judges 6: 22, 23; 13: 21, 22); and inasmuch as it had been some four hundred years since a messenger from heaven had appeared to men, we can well imagine how Zacharias must have felt. (Cf. Dan. 10: 1-12.)

But the angel said unto him. Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. The words "Fear not" have been called the first words of the gospel which began at that hour to unfold itself. Some commentators are of the opinion that Zacharias' supplication was for the coming Messiah, but it seems more natural and more in keeping with the context to regard it as a petition for an offspring. Vincent observes that if we render the aorist tense literally, *was heard*, we avoid the question as to what prayer is referred to. It is very probable that he had ceased to pray for a child, due to the extreme ages of both him and his wife; and it is very doubtful that he would offer a prayer of that kind in such a public and solemn service. This is the probable reason for the use of the aorist, since the reference was to his prayers of the past. It is as if the angel said unto him, "Your supplication, which you no longer make, *was heard*."

The statement "and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son" reminds us of a similar situation in the life of Abraham; but, unlike Abraham, Zacharias did not believe the words of the angel Gabriel who spoke unto him. (See Luke 1: 18-20; cf. Rom. 4: 16-21.) Although John was born of natural parents, he was, nevertheless, a gift of God; and that fact is seen in the name which was given to him. The name means "Jehovah is gracious"; or, literally, "the gift of God." The interesting facts concerning the

naming of the child are recorded in Luke 1: 59-63.

And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. The experience of Zacharias and Elisabeth would be similar to that of Abraham and Sarah, when their son was born. They would have an exultant or lively joy. In saying that many would rejoice at his birth, the reference was doubtless to its consequences, rather than to the time of it.

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. Some Bible students think that John's greatness in the sight of the Lord signified that he was closer to the Lord in his official standing than any of the other prophets. Jesus, in speaking of John, said that he was more than a prophet; and he added, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." (See Matt. 11: 7-11.)

John's abstinence from intoxicating beverages seems to have designated him as a Nazirite, that is, one who was separated or consecrated. The usual vow of a Nazirite was for a limited time (see Num. 6: 1-21), but John's separation and consecration were of perpetual duration. (Cf. Judges 13: 2-5.) Wine was made from grape, while "strong drink" was any kind of intoxicating liquor not made from grapes. The marginal note for the latter is *sikera*. Wycliffe called it *sydir*. It has been said that as the *leper* was the living symbol of sin, just so was the Nazirite the living symbol of holiness. Instead of alcoholic stimulants, John was to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit, "even in his mother's womb," according to Tyndale. (Cf. Luke 1: 41, 44; Acts 2: 15-18; Eph. 5: 18.)

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him. John the Baptist was a moral and religious reformer; and his most effective work seems to have

been done in his preaching. What is said here regarding his work was a quotation from the last words of the Old Testament: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4: 5, 6.) Jesus himself said that John was the Elijah who was to come. (See Matt. 17: 9-13.) The angel told Zacharias that he would do his work "in the spirit and power of Elijah." It was the Old Testament Elijah who turned the Israelites back to God. (See 1 Kings, chapter 17 and 18.)

The Birth of John

(Luke 1: 57)

Now Elisabeth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. Between the announcement of John's birth and its actual occurrence, several interesting things took place, among which we note (1) the punishment visited upon Zacharias for his unbelief; (2) the announcement of the forthcoming birth of Jesus; (3) Mary's visit with Elisabeth; and (4) the prophetic song of Mary, sometimes called the *Magnificat*. See Luke 1: 46 and note the word "magnify."

We learn from Luke 1: 26, 36 that John was six months older than Jesus, and also from the latter verse that they were related by family ties. The King James Version says that their mothers were cousins, but the original term does not necessarily signify that relationship. The American Standard Version gives the more literal translation, namely, "kinswoman." They may have been distant cousins, but is hardly probable that they were as closely related as first cousins. Mary belonged to the tribe of Judah (Luke 1: 32, 69), while Elisabeth was of the tribe of Levi (Luke 1: 5). The family relationship of Elisabeth and Mary was evidently due to inter-tribal marriage.

The Silent Years

(Luke 1: 80)

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel. This is all the information we have regarding John from the time of his infancy until he began his ministry; but this is enough to give us some idea of the nature of his growth and development. (Cf. 1 Sam. 2: 26; Luke 2: 40, 52.) The deserts were probably the solitudes of Judaea, where he had ample opportunities for rugged self-discipline and communion with God.

Questions for Discussion

What is our subject for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Give some facts regarding Luke and his viewpoint as a gospel writer.
What peculiar emphasis did he put upon the work of Jesus?
For whom did he write especially?
What effect did this have upon his narrative?
What preparation did Luke make for writing the book which bears his name?
What can you say of his inspiration, in the light of this fact?

The Golden Text

Who foretold the mission of John? and under what figures?
Why was it necessary to send John before Jesus came? Discuss fully.
What are some of the things which Luke said concerning John's work?

The Birth of John Foretold

Who were the parents of John? and what does the Bible say about them?
What was meant by "the order of his course," that is, of Zacharias?

What was "his lot"? and why was it necessary to have lots?
What did the people do at the hour of incense?
Give a description of this period of worship.
What effect did the appearance of the angel have upon Zacharias and why?
What has been called "the first words of the gospel" and why?
For what had Zacharias been praying?
What idea was involved in the name which was given to the child?
Contrast Zacharias with Abraham under similar situations.
Why would many rejoice at the birth of John?
What would be his standing in the sight of the Lord and why?
What was the significance of John's abstinence from alcoholic beverages?
In what would his principal work consist?
What was meant by "the spirit and power of Elijah"?
How do we know that John fulfilled the Old Testament prediction concerning the coming of Elijah?
What place would the Holy Spirit have in his life?

What were some of the things which took place between the announcement that John would be born, and his actual birth?
 What do we know regarding the difference in the ages of John and Jesus?
 In what way were they related?
 How could Elisabeth and Mary be kinswomen when they belonged to different tribes?
 How do we know to which tribes they belonged?
 What is known of the youth and early manhood of John?
 What is said regarding his growth and development?

Compare him in this respect with Samuel and Jesus.
 What did Jesus say regarding the greatness of John the Baptist?
 How do we know that John was not in the kingdom which Christ came to establish?
 Where did John spend his life before he began the ministry for which he was sent?
 What advantage would accrue to him in such an atmosphere?
 When and under what circumstances did John begin his ministry?
 What was the burden of his preaching?
 What can you say of the courage of John?

Lesson II—April 10, 1960

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Lesson Text

Luke 2: 40-52

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'-sa-lem at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast;

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Je'-sus tarried behind in Je-ru'-sa-lem: and his parents knew it not;

44 But supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance:

45 And when they found him not, they returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem, seeking for him.

46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers,

both hearing them, and asking them questions:

47 And all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'-a-reth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'-sus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Golden Text.—*"Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men"* (Luke 2: 52.)

Devotional Reading.—Isa. 9: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- April 4. M.....Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-7)
- April 5. T.....Visit of the Shepherds (Luke 2: 8-20)
- April 6. W.....Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2: 25-39)
- April 7. T.....Visit of the Wise Men (Matt. 2: 1-12)
- April 8. F.....Sojourn in Egypt (Matt. 2: 13-23)
- April 9. S.....Jesus as a Boy (Luke 2: 40-52)
- April 10. S.....Righteousness and Peace (Isa. 11: 1-9)

Time.—Probably about A.D. 8.

Places.—Jerusalem and the temple.

Persons.—Jesus, his parents, and the teachers in the temple.

Introduction

The Bible is the only authentic book which contains information concerning Jesus, but after one has read everything which that holy volume contains he will know very little about the childhood, youth, and early manhood of the Master. Mark and John say absolutely nothing about the first thirty years of his life, and one can read everything which Matthew and Luke say in much less than thirty minutes. Matthew devotes one chapter to the visit of the wise men from the east, the flight into Egypt, and the return to Nazareth where the family of Jesus made their home.

Luke, in like manner, has only one chapter which relates to the early life of Jesus. He gives the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child, including the reason why that event took place in Bethlehem of Judaea. One verse mentions the circumcision and naming of the babe when he was eight days old, and that is followed by his presentation in the temple, where the usual sacrifice which the law of Moses required for the first-born of every family was offered. (See Lev. 12: 1-8; cf. Ex. 13: 2, 12.) It was while they were in the temple that they met and heard the words of Simeon and Anna.

If one should read either Matthew's or Luke's account alone he would fail to get the full picture of that which happened. For example, one would gather from Matthew that the Wisemen from the east came almost immediately after the birth of Jesus. And in a similar manner, if one should read Luke alone he would get the impression that Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth immediately after the presentation in the temple;

for that is what Luke says. "And when they had accomplished all the things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." (Luke 2: 39.)

Anyone who is familiar with the gospel narratives is aware of the fact that it was never the intention of any one of the four to record all of the events in the life of Jesus in their chronological order. Each writer had a definite purpose before him, and he simply selected such incidents and teaching which would accomplish the purpose and wrote accordingly. Someone has said that the gospels agree in giving us, not one unbroken history, but a succession of separate short narratives, like a succession of pictures in which a painter represents a complete history.

It takes all of Matt. 2 and Luke 2 to complete the picture, but it is obvious that neither writer recorded all of the things which took place. However, if both chapters are considered together, and in the light of the known facts, it is fairly easy to reconstruct the happenings of that period in the life of Jesus in chronological order. Here is the full picture: (1) the birth of Jesus, Luke 2: 1-7; (2) the shepherds and the angels, Luke 2: 8-20; (3) the circumcision and the naming, Luke 2: 21; (4) the presentation in the temple, and the homage of Simeon and Anna, Luke 2: 22-38; (5) the visit and departure of the Wisemen, Matt. 2: 1-12; (6) the flight into Egypt and the slaughter of the innocent children, Matt. 2: 13-18; and (7) the return from Egypt to Nazareth, Matt. 2: 19-23; Luke 2: 39.

The Golden Text

The last verse of the lesson text serves also as the golden text, and it

will be considered in its regular order.

The Text Explained

Childhood Growth and Development

(Luke 2: 40)

And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. This is all the information we have regarding Jesus from his infancy until he was twelve years of age, but these words are pregnant with meaning.

They describe the natural, human growth of Jesus, and the corresponding grace of God. It must be remembered that Jesus was both human and divine, and the human part had to grow and develop just like any other human being. As the body grew in stature, the soul grew in wisdom; and the divine nature re-

vealed its own wisdom in proportion to the measure of the bodily growth.

If anyone should wonder why so little is said of Jesus during the first thirty years of his life, the answer is probably seen in the fact that the purpose of the inspired writers was to give an account of the public ministry of Jesus, rather than the facts of his private life. As has already been pointed out, they said little about the first years of his life, but what they do say is in keeping with what any thoughtful person might expect. They reveal Jesus as being wise, pure, pleasing to God, and greatly skilled in the law of Moses. His example is one which all children should imitate; and anyone who follows him will find himself increasing in favor with both God and man.

At the Passover and in the Temple

(Luke 2: 41-51)

And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast: The law of Moses was very explicit regarding the attendance at the three great annual feasts which were ordained for the Jewish people. "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. The feast of unleavened bread, shalt thou keep: seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib (for in it thou earnest out from Egypt); and none shall appear before me empty: and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sowest in the field: and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, when thou gatherest in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Jehovah." (Ex. 23: 14-17; cf. Deut. 16: 1-17; Lev. 23: 1-44.)

In addition to the names of the feasts which are given in the passage just quoted, they were also called the passover, Pentecost (New Testament only, since it is a Greek word), and tabernacles. We are not told at what age the Jewish males were required to begin attending these feasts. It appears that the rabbis held that a boy became a "son of the law" when he reached the age of twelve, and since Luke mentions the fact that this

was the age of Christ when he went to this feast, it is possible that male children were expected to begin to attend these feasts at that age.

Alford notes that one of the great Jewish teachers, Hillel, taught that women were required to attend once each year, and it seems that the passover was the feast designated. There is nothing in the law regarding this, but we do know that women did attend these feasts. (Cf. 1 Sam 1: 1-7 and the text now before us.) It would be a wonderful thing if people today who profess to follow Jesus were as faithful to attend the assembly of the Lord's people as the pious Jews were in their day. (Cf. Heb. 10: 25; James 4: 17.)

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; The time required to observe this feast was eight days—one day for killing and eating the passover lamb, and seven days for eating unleavened bread. (See Ex. 12: 1-20; Lev. 23: 5, 6.) After the requirements of this feast had been fulfilled, the people began their journey back home, going, as the text implies, in caravans. The record does not say why Jesus tarried behind, but from what he did it may be inferred that he desired to take advantage of hearing the teachers of the law. Luke is the only writer who mentions all the stages in the life of Christ, namely, a babe, 2: 12; a child, 2: 40; a boy, 2: 43; and a man, 3: 23.

But supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. Since the people going to and from the feasts in Jerusalem travelled in caravans, it would be natural for them to suppose that Jesus was in the group, probably with other young people; and inasmuch as he was a dutiful child, they had no reason to be apprehensive regarding him. But when the time arrived for them to set up camp for the night, they began to look for him. Only parents who have temporarily lost a child can imagine how Joseph and Mary must have felt when they failed to find Jesus. And when they were con-

vinced that he was not where they supposed him to be, they immediately returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.

This is another lesson in the life of Christ which is rich in suggestions of practical application to us. People today can lose Christ in a manner which has far greater consequences than those which were experienced by the parents of Jesus in the long-ago. And when we consider who it was that lost Jesus then, the question should become more real to us. The historical Christ was lost to the one who was least expected to have such an experience; and in thinking of this matter, it is well to ask, Why did Mary lose Jesus?

The answer to this question does not lie in her failure to love and appreciate him; for it is doubtful if any mother ever loved her son more than Mary loved Jesus. She knew that he was divine as well as human. And neither did she lose him because she was an unworthy woman; for she was evidently one of the best of women (cf. Luke 1: 28), and had just been to worship. Again, she did not lose Jesus because it was impossible for her to determine his whereabouts before they left the city. With all the good which can be said about her, it must be admitted that her loss was due primarily to her carelessness; for she could have made the proper investigation, or could have urged others to do so, before they started home.

The record says simply that they *supposed* him to be in the company, and that they went a day's journey before they realized that he was not among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. Thoughtful people do not usually rely on supposition in the affairs of this life—for example, in deeds to real estate and other business transactions; but in matters of religion supposition is frequently the order of the day. It is perhaps not too much to say that the majority of failures in religion can be traced directly to this cause. The New Testament, for example, specifically condemns partyism (John 17: 20, 21; 1 Cor. 1: 10), but where is the denomination that does not *suppose* that it has Christ?

Christ himself says that if one enters the kingdom of heaven he must do the will of God (Matt. 7: 21-23),

but where is the average professed Christian who knows that he is only partially doing the divine will that does not *suppose* that he has Christ? (Cf. James 2: 10; 4: 17.) Peter teaches us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3: 18), but where is the man who makes little effort to meet that requirement who does not *suppose* that he has Christ?

But when Joseph and Mary realized that their supposition was wrong, they immediately did something about it. They did not limit their search to their kinsfolk and acquaintance, but returned immediately to the place from which they had started—to the place where they had last seen their son. This was the spirit and principle which motivated the restorers of the ancient order of things, in contrast with those who simply sought to reform existing conditions. The only way in which anyone can be sure that he is right is to go to the original source of the truth, that is, the New Testament; and any responsible individual is capable of doing just that. (Cf. John 7: 17.) Supposition in matters of religion is never acceptable to God. (See John 8: 31, 32.)

And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When we consider the Jewish method of counting time, the probability is that they returned to Jerusalem and sought for him on the next day after they missed him, that being the second day; and found him on the following or third day. The expressions "after three days" and "the third day" were used interchangeably by the Jews. (See Gen. 42: 17, 18; 2 Chron. 10: 5, 12; Esth. 4: 16; 5: 1; Matt. 27: 63, 64.) The twenty-four period (day and night) was expressed by a single term; and any part of it was made to stand for the whole. It was possible, of course, that Joseph and Mary spent three days searching for Jesus, but hardly probable. The place in the temple where Jesus was found was probably one of the rooms which had been attached to the main building, and where the rabbis conducted their schools.

It appears that the teachers in these schools sat on semi-circular benches, with their students before them, and they would therefore partially surround the pupils—hence the expression “sitting in the midst of the teachers.” These teachers were the professional instructors in their schools, and should not be confused with the scribes, who were also teachers, but primarily copyists. It does not appear that Jesus was attempting to “teach the teachers,” but was simply listening to them, and asking questions as he had the need and opportunity. This was in keeping with the practices of the schools. The teachers must have asked Jesus questions, too; for “all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. Joseph and Mary evidently stood as much in awe of the renowned teachers before whom their son sat as peasants do of kings; and it was natural therefore for them to be astonished that he was talking with them. The question which Mary asked Jesus implies that they thought that he understood when they were to leave the city, and that he was expected to depart when they did. In referring to Joseph as the “father” of Jesus, it should be remembered that he was only his *legal* father; but inasmuch as the true facts of his birth were not generally known, both Luke and Mary spoke of Joseph as being the father of Jesus. (Cf. Luke 3: 23.) This is the last time we see Joseph.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? The marginal notes say “about my Father's business,” or, as the original has it, *in the things of my Father.*

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What information do we have regarding the childhood of Jesus?
Why is so little said about that period of his life?
Give a summary of all that is said about him during the first thirty years.
Give a probable reconstruction of the events recorded by Matthew and Luke.

These are the first recorded words of Jesus, and it is in order to observe the term “must” which played such an important part in his life while upon the earth. The question which Jesus asked was not a reproachful one. It came from the simplicity and boldness of early childhood. With the divine information which Joseph and Mary had concerning Jesus, they should have expected conduct like this.

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. This is but another example of the slowness of the human mind to comprehend the things of the Spirit. (Cf. Luke 9: 43b-45; 18: 31-34.) This also accounts for the failure of many to understand the truth now. (Cf. Heb. 5: 11-14.)

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them; and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. Anyone who will take the time and make the effort to examine the facts in the case will see that all such geographical and topographical references in the Bible are correct. Mary already had many treasured sayings in her heart before Jesus could talk, such as those of the angel who announced his birth to her, the shepherds, the Wisemen, and the prophets; and she is now adding the sayings of Jesus himself.

The Scope of Ideal Advancement

(Luke 2: 52)

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Here we have the mental, physical, moral, and spiritual growth of Jesus. The marginal rendering of “stature” is *age*, which is also the meaning of the original. Although Jesus later lost the favor of men, he always had the approval of his Father. (Cf. John 5: 30; 8: 29; Matt. 17: 5.)

Childhood Growth and Development

What relation is seen between the growth of the physical and spiritual natures of Jesus?
What does this passage reveal regarding the childhood of Jesus?

At the Passover and in the Temple

What was the law regarding the passover and other annual feasts?
Why would Jesus go up to the feast at the age of twelve years?

Were the women required to go? Give reasons for your answer.
 How much time was required to fulfil the days of the passover?
 In what way is Luke distinguished from other writers of the life of Jesus?
 How did many people travel to and from the feasts in Jerusalem?
 What common mistake did Joseph and Mary make when they started home?
 Why would they suppose that Jesus was in the company?
 In what way can this incident have a practical application for us?
 Why did Mary lose her son?
 What kind of a woman was she?
 What place does supposition usually have in our lives?
 What are some of the things which people generally suppose in religion?
 What did Mary and Joseph do when they discovered that Jesus had been left behind?
 What lesson does that fact have for people today?
 How may anyone be assured of learning the truth?

When and where did Joseph and Mary find Jesus?
 What was he doing when they found him?
 Who were these teachers?
 Was Jesus endeavoring to teach them? Give reasons for your answer.
 What was the reaction of Joseph and Mary when they found their son?
 Why would they be astonished?
 In what sense was Joseph the father of Jesus?
 In what way did Jesus answer them?
 Why did he say what he did?
 Why didn't Joseph and Mary understand that which he said?
 Why are people generally so slow to grasp the teaching of the Lord?
 What is next said of Jesus? and why?
 What sayings did Mary keep in her heart? and why?
 How was it that they went "down north" in going to Nazareth?

The Scope of Ideal Advancement

In what way did Jesus grow?
 Why did he lose the favor of the people, but always retain the approval of his Father?

Lesson III—April 17, 1960

JESUS ANNOUNCES HIS PURPOSE

Lesson Text

Luke 4: 16-30

16 And he came to Naz'-a-reth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet I-sa'-iah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Ca-per-na-um, do also here in thine own country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country.

25 But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in is'-ra-el in the days of E-li-jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land;

26 And unto none of them was E-li-jah sent, but only to Zar'-e-phath, in the land of Si'-don, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And there were many lepers in Is'-ra-el in the time of E-li-sha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'-a-man the Syr'-i-an.

28 And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things;

29 And they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*” (Isa. 53: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 61: 1-3, 10, 11.

Daily Bible Readings

April 11. M.....	Jesus' Mission (John 5: 30-38)
April 12. T.....	A Scriptural Ministry (Luke 4: 16-21)
April 13. W.....	Faithful Proclaimer (Luke 4: 22-30)
April 14. T.....	Purpose in Life (Phil. 1: 12-21)
April 15. F.....	The Way of Life (Mark 12: 28-34)
April 16. S.....	Promise of Great Blessing (Luke 18: 18-30)
April 17. S.....	Christ Died for Sinners (Rom. 5: 1-8)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 27.

PLACE.—The synagogue in Nazareth.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the people in the synagogue.

Introduction

Luke begins his record of the public ministry of Jesus in the fourth chapter of his narrative. The account of his baptism is given in chapter 3, and the first thirteen verses of chapter 4 record the facts of his temptation in the wilderness. Luke puts the beginning of his great Galilean ministry next, but when all the facts are considered, it will be seen that the events of John 1: 19-4: 54 took place between the temptation of Jesus and the beginning of his Galilean ministry.

Sometime after arriving in Galilee Jesus went to his home in Nazareth; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath, and at the proper time he stood up to read. The passage which he selected for the occasion was the first part of Isa. 61. The congregation was astonished at the selection he made, since it was all in the first person singular, and the young carpenter offered no explanation for it. It sounded as if he were making the words of the prophet apply to him. The people, however,

did not have to wonder about the matter very long; for Jesus himself, after a moment of tense silence, having closed the book and sat down, calmly announced, “To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.”

So Jesus *did* mean that which he seemed to imply; and he thereby announced that his coming into the world was as a Benefactor of humanity. No one in the congregation that day could go home complaining that the service had been “dull as usual”; for it turned out to be a near-lynching. From that day forward Jesus was a man to be watched.

Unfortunately for us, our minds are so diverted by the violent impact of the words of Jesus upon his fellow townsmen, with its dramatic sequel, that we tend to overlook the words themselves. Why did Jesus select the passage which he read? Obviously, because it describes to perfection his mission upon the earth; and it is for that reason that we need to read it and heed it most carefully.

The Golden Text

“*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*” One of the finest comments which can be made on this text is to quote the entire paragraph in which it is found. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have

turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. 53: 4-6—read the entire chapter.)

Someone has said that sorrow belongs to the very nature of love, at least so long as the ends which love seeks are not perfectly realized. If there were no sin or selfishness anywhere, perhaps there would be no sorrow, but only joy; but inasmuch as we are a long way from that ideal, sorrow must abound wherever love

is found. The reason for this is obvious; for love always seeks the highest good for the objects of its affection.

The loving heart of a mother must feel sorrow if her son is wilful and disobedient, and chooses a path of sin which she knows will end in his eternal destruction; and the test of the quality of that love is in its endurance and the range of its self-sacrifice. Is she prepared to spare

no pain or effort to bridge the gap which separates her from her wayward child? If pain therefore enters into human love, and if human love is a reflection of Divine love, then the conclusion that God also suffers because of the sins of his people appears to be inevitable. There can be no greater demonstration of this than the fact that he gave his only begotten Son to die for his rebellious people. (Cf. John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8.)

The Text Explained

"As His Custom Was"

(Luke 4: 16-20)

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. This visit to Nazareth was made after Jesus began his Galilean ministry, and it is probably the same as the one referred to in Matt. 13: 54-58 and Mark 6: 1-16. Sometime before this he had left Nazareth and had gone to Capernaum to make his home. (See Matt. 4: 13.) He had lived in Nazareth for approximately thirty years, and was, of course, well known to the citizens there. While Jesus no doubt was regular in his attendance at the synagogue, and had been since he was old enough, it appears, however, that the reference here to his custom was to that which had been taking place since he began his preaching ministry. Luke 4: 15 says that he taught in their synagogues, and, with that information before us, we gather that it was his custom to take advantage of the opportunities which the synagogue services afforded him for teaching the people. And so, on this occasion he entered into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read the sacred scriptures. It was customary to stand while reading the word of God. (Cf. Neh. 8: 1-5.)

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. The marginal reading for "the book" is *o. roll*, that is, a roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. Many modern Bible students are of the opinion that our present Book of Isaiah is in reality a composite production of at least three widely different parts, instead of being a literary unit; and that the parts known as Second and

Third Isaiah were by men other than the prophet of that name. But from Luke's statement in the text now before us—"the book of the prophet Isaiah"—it is natural for us to think of the entire book as being a record of his prophecy. This is especially true since the quotation now before us is from the section which these modern students call Third Isaiah.

And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

Before proceeding further with this study, the student, if he has not already done so, should familiarize himself with Isa. 61, and especially verses 1-3, since that is the passage which Jesus read on the occasion now before us. Isaiah was sent by Jehovah to proclaim to his suffering countrymen that God had looked in pity upon their woes, and that he was about to set them on their feet again with their faces toward the sun. The people were then in Babylonian captivity, but the prophet told them that Jehovah was going to call them home. He would heal the wounded, set free the captives, give his afflicted people "a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning," and "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." This was all for the good of the people, and for the glory of God.

Then seven hundred years later Jesus came with his message and

mission. The times had changed, the scene had shifted, and the personnel was different; but Jesus took the words of Isaiah and applied them to his own work. History was repeating itself, but with this difference: Isaiah's prophecy was concerned with a particular people and a definite situation; while the prophecy of Jesus, although expressed in the same words, had both a particular and a universal application. Jesus was sent, not only to the people of his day, but to men of all nations and for all time. His work is perpetuated through his disciples. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 2; John 17: 20.)

It appears that Luke reported the quotation which Christ used from Isaiah in the language of the Septuagint, which was in general use in the days of Jesus, and that accounts for the different wording in Isaiah and Luke. Prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament were anointed with oil when they were consecrated or set apart to their work, and so Jesus speaks of himself as being anointed for his mission, but it was with the Holy Spirit, rather than with oil. Or, to drop the figure, Jesus said that he was divinely inspired to speak and do his work. The Holy Spirit was upon him because he was appointed to do a work of divine helpfulness. The work which is here outlined may be spoken of as the world program of Jesus, and in it the following points are emphasized.

1. *Preaching the gospel to the poor.* The poor here are the "poor in spirit," the lowly, the afflicted—those who feel their spiritual destitution, and who are willing to listen to and give themselves up to the teaching of Jesus. (Cf. Matt. 5: 3; 11: 4, 5.)

2. *Proclaiming release to the captives.* Captivity of any kind has always been a sad spectacle; but the cruellest chains which shackle men are the chains of sin and death. And what Jesus is saying is that henceforth there may be release from these for all who desire it. (See John 8: 31, 32, 34.)

3. *Recovering of sight to the blind.* The blind under consideration are those who are spiritually blind: those whose spiritual discernment has been blunted and blurred. Before Jesus came it was difficult for even the holy to see God; but since he came in the flesh the pure in heart have no

trouble in seeing the Father. (Cf. John 14: 7-9; Matt. 5: 8; 11: 25-30.)

4. *Setting at liberty them that are bruised.* Those broken by calamity, particularly the brokenhearted. Cf. Isa. 66: 2. It is good to know that Jesus is willing to mend broken hearts, like one who mends broken pieces of earthenware, and that "earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."

Down in the human heart, crushed
by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can
restore:

Touched by a loving heart, wak-
ened by kindness,

Chords that were broken will vi-
brate once more.

5. *Proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord.* There is here, perhaps, an allusion to the year of jubilee under the law of Moses. (See Lev. 25: 1-13.) But, insofar as the mission of Christ is concerned, the reference is to the time when God is willing to receive sinners who come to him according to the terms of the gospel. (Cf. 2 Cor. 6: 2; Heb. 4: 7.)

Considered from the Lord's side, he will always be successful (cf. Isa. 55: 10, 11); but since he has seen fit to place a large amount of the responsibility for this work in the hands of his disciples, their faithfulness will always be a large factor in the success of the program. (Cf. Mark 16: 15; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) Every Christian therefore has a great responsibility resting upon him; and his attitude toward it will have a vital effect upon the work of the Lord in this world, the result of which will reach into eternity.

This may have been the first time that Jesus had appeared before the synagogue in the capacity of a teacher, and keeping in mind the unusual nature of the passage which he had just read, and the fact of the fame which he was then enjoying as a result of his miracles, it is not surprising that the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fastened upon him, as he closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. Sitting was the common posture for Jewish teachers.

The Lord's Message

(Luke 4: 21-27)

*And he began to say unto them,
To-day hath this scripture been ful-*

filled in your ears. It is very probable that Jesus delivered a much longer discourse than Luke recorded. It seems to have been sufficient for Luke's purpose to record only a summary of the sermon, with particular reference to the Lord's explanation of the passage which he had read. The prophecy was evidently fulfilled in the hearing of the people by the Lord's proclamation of it, and the ministry which he was performing. As already pointed out in this study, the primary reference in the prophecy was to Isaiah and the Israelitish exiles in Babylon; but it found a more complete fulfillment in Jesus and his ministrations.

And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son? The term "grace" seems to refer to the manner of the speech of Jesus, rather than to the subject matter of his address. His words came easily and gracefully. In bearing him witness, they acknowledged the truth of that which he said, and the power with which he said it; but because of their familiarity with his humanity, they were wholly unable to account for either his marvelous teaching or miraculous works; and because of that, they became jealous of him and refused to believe in him.

And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country. The refusal of his former neighbors to believe in him stemmed from the fact that they considered him as being only a human being. Their attitude in this respect was the exact opposite of that of Nicodemus. "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 1, 2.) It is only as one recognizes and accepts Jesus as being God's Son that he can understand that which he said and did, as recorded in the New Testament.

The meaning of the parable which Jesus quoted seems to have been this: "You have been working mira-

cles in Capernaum, but have wholly neglected your own home community. Now, if you expect us to believe in you, let us see your miracles too." McGarvey and Pendleton paraphrase the meaning in these words, "You can do big things at Capernaum, but you cannot do them here. You cannot deceive us; we know you."

And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country. But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. Jesus cites two Old Testament examples to show that it was no new thing for a prophet to be despised in his own country. Both of the prophets named were driven by the unbelief of their fellow Israelites to work miracles among aliens, rather than in their own country. And in citing these two cases, it is worthy of note that Jesus gave his endorsement to the Old Testament records.

A Violent Reaction

(Luke 4: 28-30)

And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things; and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way. This is a classic example of what happens to people "m church" when they do not have the right attitude. Jesus had spoken nothing but the truth, and had cited two scriptural examples to illustrate it; but the reaction of the people was so violent that they tried to kill him. No one is ever justified in becoming angry at another when he tells him the truth. (Cf. Gal. 4: 16.) The Nazarenes were filled with wrath instead of repenting and turning to God.

Questions for Discussion

State the subject of this lesson.
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What events in the life of Christ immediately preceded his Galilean ministry?
Why did Christ's visit to Nazareth create so much interest?

The Golden Text

Read or quote the entire paragraph which contains the golden text.
What relation does sorrow sustain to true love? Why is this so?
How may the Divine love be forcefully illustrated?
What makes us feel that God suffers when his people sin against him?

"As His Custom Was"

When did Jesus make this visit to Nazareth?
Why was it so significant?
What "custom" does Luke refer to?
Why would he stand up to read?
What book was delivered to him? and why?
Give reasons for or against regarding Isaiah as a literary unit.
Do you think that Jesus made the selection himself? or was it made by the leaders of the synagogue?
What part of the Old Testament did Jesus read? and why was the passage so appropriate for the occasion?
What was the primary application of the prophecy?

What was the principal difference between its application in the cases of Isaiah and Jesus?

Why mention the subject of "anointing"?
Why and with what was Jesus anointed? and what did it signify?

What are the five principal points in the program of Jesus?

Who are the "poor" to whom the gospel is preached?

From what are "captives" to be released?

Who are the "blind"?

In what way are people "bruised"?

What is the "acceptable year of the Lord"?

Upon what does the success of the Lord's program depend?

Why would the people of Nazareth be so interested in what Jesus said and did at this time?

The Lord's Message

How did Jesus begin his address?
In what sense was the prophecy fulfilled that day?

How was the congregation affected?

What parable did Jesus mention? and why?

What two Old Testament references did Jesus cite? and why?

A Violent Reaction

What was the reason for this violent reaction?

What lesson does it have for us?

Why would the people want to kill Jesus?

Why can't "religious people" see the folly of such an attitude?

Lesson IV—April 24, 1960

JESUS TEACHES RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lesson Text

Luke 6: 39-49

39 And he spake also a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit?

40 The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit.

44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them. I will show you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could

not shake it: because it had been well builded.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house

upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise”* (Luke 6: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—PROV. 3: 13-18.

Daily Bible Readings

- April 18. M..... Righteousness Defined and Illustrated (Psalm 119: 172)
- April 19. T..... Nature of Righteousness (Luke 6: 39-45)
- April 20. W..... Basis of Righteousness (Luke 6: 46-49)
- April 21. T..... Quality of Righteousness (Luke 6: 27-37)
- April 22. F..... Self-righteousness Condemned (Gal. 6: 1-10)
- April 23. S..... Righteousness and Worship (Matt. 5: 21-26)
- April 24. S..... Righteousness Accepted (Acts 10: 34)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—On or near a mountain in Galilee, probably mount Hattin.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

The section from which the lesson text is taken contains teaching by Jesus which is similar to, if not identical with, the passage in Matthew which is known as the Sermon on the Mount. The two passages are so much alike that when they are both read one is made to wonder if the two records are of the same sermon. There is no known way to be absolutely sure about this, and neither is it important that we should know in order to understand the Lord’s teaching.

The apparent contradiction between Matthew and Luke regarding the place of the sermon’s delivery has led some to think that the two records do not refer to the same event. Matthew says that the sermon was delivered on a mountain, while Luke says that it was spoken on a level place. But is it possible that this so-called contradiction is more apparent than real. There could have been a level place on the side of the mountain, but it should not be overlooked that Luke says that “he came down with them, and stood on a level Place.” Some have tried to explain the matter by suggesting that Jesus

chose the twelve on the top of the mountain, after spending the night in prayer; and that he descended with them to the plain where he healed the sick (see Matt. 4: 23-25; Luke 6: 12-19); and then later returned with them to the mountain where he delivered the sermon.

But as has already been suggested, the question as to whether or not the records of Matthew and Luke are of the same sermon, or the same teaching on different occasions, is not of great importance. It is enough to know that the teaching is practically the same, and that it was given by Jesus. If Matthew and Luke reported the same sermon, then it appears that it was delivered a short time after the Lord’s controversy with the Pharisees. (See Luke 6: 1-11.) The real point at issue was not the sabbath question as such, but the deep underlying contrast between Christ’s spiritual interpretation of the law, and the literal interpretation of the Pharisees. The discussion of this contrast occupies a major part of the sermon, as reported by Matthew, as may be seen by reading Matt. 5: 17-48.

The Golden Text

“As ye would that men should do you, do ye also to them likewise”
This is Luke’s version of the Golden Rule, and it should be considered in the light of Matthew’s record of it. (See Matt. 7: 12.) The reason why this precept is called the Golden Rule

is that it embraces in few words the underlying and governing principle of all morality. McGarvey and Pendleton note that it contains all the precepts of the law with regard to man, and all the amplifications of those precepts which were given by

the prophets. It teaches us to put ourselves in our neighbor's place, and then direct our conduct accordingly. It assumes, of course, that when we put ourselves in our neighbor's place, we are wise enough not to make any foolish wishes, and good enough not to make any evil ones.

The general idea of the Golden Rule has long been appreciated by the human race. Many great leaders have attempted to give expression to it; but it remained for Jesus to state the ideal in the most comprehensible terms possible. The sentiment which Jesus expressed in this rule is echoed throughout the New Testament. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. . . . Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13: 8, 10.) "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Gal. 5:

14.) "Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law according to the scriptures, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well." (James 2: 8.)

One of the most striking characteristics of the teaching of Jesus is its practicableness. There is nothing about his program for his people which is incapable of being put into practice. His purpose in teaching was not to gratify intellectual curiosity by unveiling divine mysteries, but rather to give guidance for daily living. Religious knowledge, if God is to be pleased, must issue forth in genuine goodness of character and conduct. (Cf. John 13: 17; James 4: 17.) The ideal expressed by Jesus in the Golden Rule can be of real benefit to us, only as we are willing to apply it in our lives. We must learn to live daily by this standard, which means that we must learn to order all of our social relationships according to its spirit.

The Text Explained

The Status and Proper Attitude of the Disciple

(Luke 6: 39-42)

And he spake also a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit?

This same parabolic teaching is also found in Matt. 15: 14, but with a somewhat different application. In Matthew Jesus was warning his disciples against the Pharisaic spirit of pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency which renders its possessor blind, that is, unable to perceive the truth; and that those who follow leaders who are thus devoid of the truth will fall with them into a pit. But in the passage now before us, if the parable has any connection with the context in which it is found, it was probably intended to point out to the newly selected apostles that those who are uncharitable and who condemn unjustly are wholly unfit to guide men in the way of righteousness.

The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher.

This same idea was also expressed by Jesus in Matt. 10: 24, 25, but there it was clearly intended to teach the disciples that they could not hope for better treatment with regard to per-

secution than Jesus their Teacher was receiving. But here again Luke probably meant for it to have a connection with the context in which it is found; and if that is so, then the idea seems to be that no well-instructed disciple will endeavor to go beyond his teacher in the matter of censorious judging, but will when he is perfected be as his teacher. This attitude of following the teacher is true, not only in reference to persecution and uncharitable judgment, but of all other relations in which the disciple may find himself.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. In teaching against uncharitable judging, Jesus graphically and grotesquely represents a man with a large piece of timber, such as the main timber in the roof or floor of a building, in his eye trying to get a chip or splinter out of his brother's eye. Both men, indeed, have faults.

but the picture is that of the man with the greater fault trying to correct the one with the lesser. Or, to express the same thing in other words, the beam represents the spirit of censoriousness which watches for something in others, that is, something on which it can fasten and condemn. Such a spirit distorts the vision, and makes it impossible for one to deal justly with anything which is wrong in another, especially if the latter is not in the favor of the critic.

The implication in that which Jesus said regarding this matter is this: Instead of resorting to censorious judgment, we ought to try to remove the mote from our brother's eye; but before we can do that, we must first remove the uncharitable spirit from our own selves—we must get the beam out of our own eye. And until that is done, no one can see clearly that which should be done for another.

It often happens that when people read statements like the one now before us, they go to the other extreme, and conclude that it is wrong even to recognize the faults of others. But no one can read the New Testament and hold to such an idea; for it is clear that Jesus does not forbid our seeing, and even disapproving, the wrongs of our brethren. But having condemned the evil which is in them, we should make an earnest effort to try to save them, as we realize both their and our own precarious condition. "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.) "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (James 5: 19, 20.)

A Criterion Which Never Fails

(Luke 6: 43-45)

For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of

thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. It appears that Jesus, in the statement now before us, is continuing the same general idea of the fitness of those who would teach others. He had just shown that a spirit of uncharitable and unjust judgment disqualifies one as a successful teacher; and now, if one's life is evil and his instruction foreign to the will of God, it is in vain for him to attempt to teach others. Teachers are to be judged by their conduct as men, and also by the effect of their teaching. If either is predominantly evil, the would-be teacher must be avoided. But, as McGarvey and Pendleton note, we must not judge hastily, nor by slight and trivial actions; for some specimens of bad fruit grow on good trees.

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. In these verses Jesus drops the figure and speaks plainly of the source of our speech and conduct. The wise man of another age succinctly said, "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he." (Prov. 23: 7.) And again, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4: 23.) All of these statements, those by Jesus and Solomon, teach that a man's speech can be traced to inward fountains, or, which is the same thing, the secret reservoirs of the heart. Our conversation is a current which flows from them.

Jesus says that it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks, and whatever our words may be we may be certain that they are the expression of this abundance, whether they are spoken in the full vigor of purposeful speech, or in the languid drip of idle conversation. This is enough to show us that our speech has large relationships. The little stream which flows through the countryside has its origin in the hidden springs of the hills, and in the same manner the speech which comes from our lips issues forth from the springs of our heart.

And in this connection, there is another fact to be remembered, a fact

which has already been referred to, namely, the stream always takes its quality and color from its source. If any one will take the time to analyse the stream which flows through the valley, he will learn something about the heart of the hill from which it comes. For example, the iron, the sulphur, and all other deposits, tell their story; the things in solution always bear testimony to the solids in which they were born. And in the same manner, if the spontaneous speech of a man is tested it is possible to know the character of his heart. This is what Jesus says in another place:

"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. 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: 33-37.)

The Need for a Solid Foundation

(Luke 6: 46-49)

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? This statement corresponds to Matt. 7: 21-23 which 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. 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." For an example of that which will happen at the last day, see Matt. 25: 11, 12. There is no point in giving Christ the title of Lord, while withholding the service which goes with it. Empty titles are never acceptable to God.

Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth

them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

When this account is read in the light of the one in Matt. 7: 24-27 it will be easy to see the great advantage which is gained in the supplemental aspect which characterizes them; and it is only in this way that we can get the full significance of the parable. When we read the two accounts together the emphasis of the teaching is deepened and enriched. For example, Matthew says that the wise man built *upon the rock*, while Luke adds the intensifying line, *who digged and went deep*. Matthew mentions *rain, floods, and winds*; Luke adds the forceful figure of a mountain torrent in its mad rush down its resounding bed. Matthew merely says that the house *fell*; Luke adds that the fall was *straightway*, that is, *immediately*. Matthew concludes the parable by saying that *great was the fall thereof*; Luke goes a step further and enables us to look upon the desolate confusion after the storm had died away—*the ruin of that house was great*.

With the combined records of the two evangelists before us, it is in order to ask, What is the teaching of the Lord's parable of the two builders? One man is satisfied only with making every effort to see that the foundation is adequate in all of its details, while the other is content to set his house down on the unprepared earth; and it is upon this last statement that the teaching of the parable culminates. The house of the foolish man was built without giving any consideration to the stability of its base. It is this type of haphazard living, the life which is content with the superficial, planting its house upon the surface, seeking to make it imposing rather than enduring, and concerned only with a structure to

be admired, while giving no thought to the testing time, that the Lord warns against.

A righteous life can be lived only as one is willing to listen to and obey that which the Lord teaches. Paul contrasts the two ways of life in these words: "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants of 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.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

How does Luke's record of the Lord's teaching in this section compare with Matthew's Sermon on the Mount?
Give reasons for and against thinking that they are the same.
Give the background of the teaching now under consideration.

The Golden Text

In what way does the statement of the Golden Rule differ in Luke and Matthew?
Why is the precept called the Golden Rule?
Are there any limitations to its application?
In what way is the sentiment of this rule echoed in the New Testament?
What is one of the most striking characteristics of the teaching of Jesus? Discuss fully.

The Status and Proper Attitude of the Disciple

What did Jesus mean by the parable of the blind guiding the blind?
What is the relation between the disciple and his teacher? Why?
What relation do verses 39, 40 have to the immediate context?
Why does uncharitable judging unfit one for teaching and leadership?
How did Jesus express himself regarding this?

What are the lessons of the "beam" and the "mote"?
Is it wrong to condemn wrong in others?
Give reasons for your answer.
What obligation rests upon the one who does the condemning?

A Criterion Which Never Fails

In what way is this section related to the general topic before us?
What is the criterion which never fails?
In what way must teachers be judged?
What is the source of our speech and conduct? Why is this true?
What is "the abundance of the heart"?
What story does the stream always tell?
What other statement did Jesus make regarding our speech? and what solemn affirmation did he make regarding it?

The Need for a Solid Foundation

Why did Jesus ask the question in verse 46?
What did Jesus say regarding the cry of Lord, Lord?
State the parable of the two builders.
What advantage is gained by reading the accounts of Luke and Matthew together?
Compare the two accounts with special emphasis on their supplemental aspect.
What is the principal lesson of the parable of the two builders?
Point out the chief characteristic of the two builders, and show in detail why one is wise and the other foolish.
What is meant by righteous living?
How alone may one live such a life?

Lesson V—May 1, 1960

JESUS AND THE MAN POSSESSED OF DEMONS

Lesson Text

Luke 8: 26-37

26 And they arrived at the country of the Ger'-a-senes', which is over against Gal'-i-lee.

27 And when he was come forth upon the land, there met him a certain man out of the city, who had demons; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in any house, but in the tombs.

28 And when he saw Je'-sus, he cried out, and fell down before him,

and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Je'-sus, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 For he was commanding the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For oftentimes it had seized him: and he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters; and breaking the bands asunder, he was driven of the demon into the deserts.

30 And Je'-sus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; for many demons were entered into him.

31 And they entreated him that he would not command them to depart into the abyss.

32 Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain; and they entreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave.

33 And the demons came out from the man, and entered into the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake, and were drowned.

34 And when they that fed them saw what had come to pass, they

fled, and told it in the city and in the country.

35 And they went out to see what had come to pass; and they came to Je'-sus, and found the man, from whom the demons were gone out, sitting, clothed and in his right mind, at the feet of Je'-sus: and they were afraid.

36 And they that saw it told them how he that was possessed with demons was made whole.

37 And all the people of the country of the Ger'-a-senes' round about asked him to depart from them; for they were holden with great fear: and he entered into a boat, and returned.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 47.

Daily Bible Readings

April 25.	M.....	Jesus and Human Values (Luke 8: 26-34)
April 26.	T.....	Worth of a Child (Matt. 18: 1-6)
April 27.	W.....	Man's Worth (Matt. 12: 1-13)
April 28.	T.....	Saved to Serve Others (Luke 1: 68-75)
April 29.	F.....	False Charges (Mark 3: 19-30)
April 30.	S.....	Preaching in Galilee (Luke 8: 1-3)
May 1.	S.....	Parallel Accounts (Matt. 8: 28-34)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—The country of the Gerasenes.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the man and the demons, the swine feeders, and the people.

Introduction

The question of “demonology” has a prominent place in the New Testament, and especially in the gospel records; and it is well, at the very outset of our study today, to get a clear idea as to the meaning of the term. Who or what were the demons? and in what sense did they dwell in people? In speaking of the use of the word “demon” in the New Testament, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* says, “Nothing is said either to support or to contradict the common Jewish belief, that in their ranks might be numbered the spirits of the wicked dead. In support of it are sometimes quoted the fact that the demoniacs sometimes haunted the tombs of the dead (Matt. 8: 28), and the supposed reference of the epithet *akatharta* to the ceremonial uncleanness of a dead body.” (Note: the Greek word *akatharta*, as used here, means impure or unclean.)

Alexander Campbell delivered a

lecture on the subject of demonology, and in it he clearly defines the meaning of the term *demon*. “We have, then, only to ask, first, for the current signification of this term *demon* in Judea at the Christian era; and, in the second place, Did the inspired writers ever give any special definition of it? We have already found an answer to the first in the Greeks and Jews of the apostolic age, and of the preceding and subsequent ages. We have heard Josephus, Philo, Lucian, Justin and Lardner, from whose writings and affirmations we are expressly told what the universal acceptance of the term was in Judea and in those times. In the second place, the apostles and our Lord, as already said, use this word in various forms seventy-five times, and on no occasion give any hint of a special, private or peculiar interpretation of it; which was not their method when they used a term either not generally

understood, or understood in a special sense. Does anyone ask the meaning of the words, Messiah, prophet, priest, elder, deacon, presbytery, altar, sacrifice, sabbath, circumcision, etc.? We refer him to the current signification of these words among the Jews and Greeks of that age. Why, then, should anyone except the term *demon* from the universal law? Are we not, therefore, sustained by the highest and most authoritative decision of that literary tribunal by whose rules and decrees all works sacred and profane are translated from a dead to a living tongue? We are, then, fully authorized to say that the demons of the New Testament were the spirits of dead men."

The Golden Text

"The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost " This is the Lord's explanation as to why he went into the home of Zacchaeus, and the whole account of that incident furnishes one of the clearest illustrations of the manner in which Jesus wins men to himself. The narrative itself has been called the love of God in action. Zacchaeus, as all Bible readers know, was a publican or tax-collector, and that meant that he was a social outcast, so far as the Jews were concerned; and they apparently had no interest whatsoever in the salvation of such a person.

One of the greatest difficulties in helping and saving people is the inability to get close to them. We may have a message which we want them to hear, and which will do them good because it comes from God; but the

The following passage from Matthew gives us some idea of the relationship which existed between demons and those who were possessed by them. "But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first." (Matt. 12: 43-45a.)

problem is how to gain their confidence and get them in the mood to listen. It is comparatively easy to befriend and serve people who come to us; but how to reach the man who in his indifference holds himself aloof is the question which challenges our attention.

Not every person, of course, is in the same situation as Zacchaeus, nor is everyone faced with the same problem; but whatever the need may be, it must be met in the same spirit in which Jesus met the shortcomings of the rich publican. Jesus sought him for what he was—a lost soul—and not because of his wealth or standing; and after Zacchaeus was rescued, he doubtless felt that he was like a jewel or coin which had been found and put back into its rightful place. (Cf. James 5: 19, 20.)

The Text Explained

A Demonic Meets Jesus

(Luke 8 : 26-30)

And they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is over against Galilee. The arrival referred to was the one which followed the voyage during which Jesus stilled the storm which threatened, as the disciples thought, to destroy the ship in which they were sailing. The route which they took on this trip was probably east or southeast from Capernaum. The country in which they landed was across the lake from Galilee. See **map**.

It will be noted that where Mark

and Luke have "Gerasenes," Matthew has "Gadarenes." Bible students are not agreed regarding this difference. McGarvey and Pendleton make this observation regarding the question: "Midway between the north and south ends of the lake, and directly east across the lake from Magdala, was the little city of Gergesa. In front and somewhat to the south of this city Jesus landed. Some sixteen miles away and to the southeast, and seven miles back from the lake, was the well-known city of Gadara. Further on to the southeast, on the borders of Arabia, and at least fifty miles from Gergesa, was the city of Gerasa.

The name Gerasenes is, therefore, probably an error of transcribers for Gergesenes, as Origen suggested. The region is properly called 'country of the Gadarenes,' for Gadara was an important city, and the stamp of a ship on its coins suggests that its territory extended to the lake of Galilee." Cf. Alford's explanation.

And when he was come forth upon the land, there met him a certain man out of the city, who had demons; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in any house, but in the tombs. It is not our purpose in this study to inquire as to when demons first began to dwell in human beings; but that they did in the days of Jesus is a fact which cannot be disputed without calling in question the credibility of the New Testament itself. The text says that the man who met Jesus "had demons"; and that means that the wicked spirits of dead men were dwelling in him. Campbell quotes an eminent Bible student as saying, "When I read of the number of demons in particular persons, and see their actions expressly distinguished from those of the man possessed; conversations held by the demons about their disposal after their expulsion, and accounts given how they were actually disposed of; when I find desires and passions ascribed peculiarly to them, and similitudes taken from their manners and customs, it is impossible for me to deny their existence, without admitting that the sacred historians were themselves deceived in regard to them, or intended to deceive their readers."

The New Testament plainly states that demons dwelt in children, as well as in adults (cf. Mark 9: 17-21), and that implies that the moral condition of the victim was not a prerequisite to the entrance of the tormentor. Or, to state the same thing in other words, it was not necessary for a person to be wicked in order for his body to be a suitable habitation for a demon. If it is asked how the demons came to enter the people they did, the probable answer is that they found conditions suitable to their wishes. (Cf. Matt. 12: 43-45.)

It is easy to surmise from the inspired records the possible reasons why the man with the demons went without clothes. (1) No one could

get them to him; and (2) if he had them he would probably destroy them immediately. He seems to have been entirely under the influence of the wicked spirits, as may be seen from verse 35 of our lesson.

And when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not. For he was commanding the unclean spirit to come out from the man. Not only were the demons who dwelt in people real, they also knew Jesus and were fully aware of their own ultimate fate. They knew that eternal torment awaited them, and their plea was that it would not begin before the time. (Cf. Matt. 8: 29.) Furthermore, the people who saw what was done recognized the fact that it was by the power or authority of Jesus that the demons were cast out. "And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." (Mark 1: 27; cf. Matt. 12: 22ff.) Edersheim, in speaking of this question, says,

"While the New Testament furnishes no data by which to learn the views of Jesus or of the Evangelists regarding the exact character of the phenomenon, it furnishes the fullest details as to the manner in which the demonised were set free. This was always the same. It consisted neither in magical means nor formulas of exorcism, but always in the Word of Power which Jesus spake, or entrusted to his disciples, and which the demons always obeyed."

For oftentimes it had seized him; and he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters; and breaking the bands asunder, he was driven of the demons into the deserts. This passage gives some idea of the horrible condition of the man who had the demons; and when we read that which Matthew and Mark say, his condition seems even more appalling. (The fact that Matthew mentions two, while Mark and Luke mention only one, is not unusual; for the latter two, and especially Mark, are often more specific and probably single out the more prominent one.)

Matthew says that these men were "exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass by that way"; while Mark notes that "no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; and no man had strength to tame him." The "deserts" were the uninhabited places, probably the tombs. We are told that the sides of the mountains in that vicinity are studded with natural and artificial caves which were used for tombs.

And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; for many demons were entered into him. Bible students are not agreed as to which one the Lord addressed this question, to the man or the demon. Some think that he was speaking to the man, but if so, it appears that the demon gave the answer. Mark says, "And he asked him, What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion; for we are many." It may have been that that was the name which the demons gave the man, and that they were directing the man to speak, just as they had done in causing him to break the bands with which he had been bound. A legion was a division of the Roman army, consisting of from four to six thousand men. The name appears to have been taken because "we are many," and not necessarily because there were actually a legion of demons in the man. There were, however, enough of them to enter into approximately two thousand swine.

A Request Granted (Luke 8: 31-33)

And they entreated him that he would not command them to depart into the abyss. This is further evidence that the evil spirits recognized the authority of Jesus over them. The term "abyss," in addition to its occurrence here, is also found in Rom. 10: 7; Rev. 9: 1, 2, 11; 11: 7; 17: 8; and 20: 1, 3. All of these passages should be read. The abyss is the dwelling place of the spirits of the dead. (Cf. Luke 16: 23; 2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6.) We are not informed as to how these and similar spirits got out of the abyss and returned to the earth.

Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they entreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave. And the demons came out from the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake, and were drowned. Mark alone gives the approximate number of the swine—"about two thousand." McGarvey and Pendleton note that about a mile south of Khersa (the Gergesa of the New Testament), a spur of the mountain thrusts itself out toward the lake, so that its foot is within forty feet of the water line. This, they continue, is the only spot on that side of the lake where the mountains come near the water. The slope is so steep, and the ledge at its foot so narrow, that a herd rushing down could not check itself before tumbling into the water.

Some people, especially unbelievers, have questioned the Lord's moral right to permit the demons to enter into the swine, and thereby contribute to the destruction of the property of others. It should be observed, however, that there is no evidence to the effect that the demons meant to destroy the animals, since it is apparent that they desired live bodies in which to live (see again Matt. 12: 43-45); but their presence in the swine evidently drove them to madness, as had been the case of the man whom they had just left. But if Jesus meant to destroy the property of others, it was no doubt due to the fact that the animals in question were unclean, and should not have been there in the first place. At any rate, we may be sure that Jesus did no wrong, whether we understand the reason for his action or not.

The Effects of the Cure (Luke 8: 34-37)

And when they that fed them saw what had come to pass, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what had come to pass; and they came to Jesus, and found the man, from whom the demons were gone out, sitting, clothed and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus: and they were afraid. In the absence of fences, it was necessary that herdsmen remain with the swine at all times while they were feeding

in the open spaces; and it would, of course, be natural for them to flee into the city and countryside and report the happenings which they had just witnessed. The people went out to see for themselves; and it is interesting to observe their reaction when they saw the result of the Lord's miracle in healing the afflicted man. Their "fear" appears to have been something less than reverent awe.

And they that saw it told them how he that was possessed with demons was made whole. And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes round about asked him to depart from them; for they were holden with great fear: and he entered into a boat, and returned. Instead of rejoicing with the man in his new estate, the people apparently were afraid that they might lose more of their property; and instead of rejoicing that Jesus with such wonderful power was among them, the asked

him to leave their shores, which he did immediately. (See verses 38, 39; cf. Mark 7: 31-37.)

In his lecture on demonology, Alexander Campbell sets forth his reason for thinking that demons do not inhabit people as they once did, and especially the Lord's people. After quoting Luke's statement, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven" (10: 18), he notes that "his empire over men from that day began to fall." The reference to the fall of Satan was made when "the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name." He then said to them, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you." (See Luke 10: 17-19.) John says, "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3: 8b.) Cf. John 12: 31; 16: 11.

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 prominence of "demonology" in the New Testament?

What were demons? and in what sense did they dwell in people?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this text?

What principle do they illustrate?

Why is it so difficult to help people who are in spiritual need?

In what spirit should Christians attempt to meet the needs of others?

A Demoniac Meets Jesus

Where was the country of the Gerasenes? and under what circumstances did Jesus and his disciples go there?

How do you account for the differences in the gospel records regarding the name of the country?

Who met Jesus as he went ashore?

Why is it necessary to believe that demons actually dwelt in people in the days of Jesus?

Did they dwell in wicked people only? Give reasons for your answer.

What was the condition of the victim of this lesson?

What was his reaction when he saw Jesus? and why?

In what sense did he ask not to be tormented?

What implication does this have?

In what way were people possessed with demons always set free?

Why was this man so strong?

Where did he dwell? and why?

What question did Jesus ask? and to whom was it addressed? Give reasons for your answer.

Who gave the answer? and what was it?

A Request Granted

What request was this?

What and where was the "abyss"?

Why didn't the demons want to go there?

What further request did they make? and why?

What does the great number of swine suggest regarding the number of demons?

Why did the swine rush into the lake?

Why did Jesus permit the demons to enter the swine, rather than send them to the abyss?

Was any moral principle involved here?

The Effects of the Cure

Who spread the report of this cure? and why?

Why were the people afraid when they saw what had happened?

Why did they ask Jesus to leave their country?

Did he ever return there? Give reasons for your answer.

Do demons dwell in people today? Give reasons for your answer.

Lesson VI—May 8, 1960

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Lesson Text

Luke 10: 25-37

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Je'sus, And who is my neighbor?

30 Je'sus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Je-ru'sa-lem to Jer'i-cho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when

he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And in like manner a Le'-vite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Sa-mar'-i-tan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion,

34 And came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Je'sus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19: 18.)
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 41: 1-4, 10-13.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 2. M..... A Good Neighbor (Matt. 5: 38-48)
- May 3. T..... Loving One's Neighbor (Matt. 19: 16-22)
- May 4. W..... Racial Barriers (John 4: 1-9)
- May 5. T..... Prejudices of Race Overcome (Acts 10: 23-33)
- May 6. F. Respect of Persons Wrong (James 2: 1-9)
- May 7. S..... Home of Hospitality (John 12: 1-8)
- May 8. S..... Duties to Neighbors (Lev. 19: 9-18)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Probably Judaea.

PERSONS.—Jesus and a certain lawyer.

Introduction

In order to appreciate the significance of this lesson, it is necessary to have some understanding of the background against which it was spoken. The Jews had, for some fifteen hundred years, considered themselves as being exclusively God's People, and had regarded all others as being godless, unclean, hopeless, and lost. This kind of attitude had led them, and especially their leaders, to become technical, narrow-

minded, and selfish. They could, and did, criticize others freely, while failing to see their own faults. They had no interest in the salvation of other people, and were vigorously opposed to any efforts in that direction. This spirit is clearly portrayed in the Book of Jonah.

Jesus had not gone very far in his public ministry before he met this kind of opposition on the part of the scribes and Pharisees, and his pur —

pose in the text now before us was to show them the error of their way, and to assure them of the love of God for all men. The Jews hated the nations about them (cf. Matt. 5: 43), and had "no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4: 9); and it was with this limited and circumscribed view of men and measures that the lawyer in the text asked the question regarding his neighbor.

Jesus had already explained to the lawyer that love for God and one's

neighbor were essential to eternal life, and the lawyer could find no fault with the Lord's statement; but that was not the answer which he wanted. If it could be demonstrated that his neighbor was one who lived nearby, that is, one of his own people with whom he enjoyed mutual kindness, then his claim to eternal life would be established. In a word, he wanted to be justified in his own attitude toward other people. This was the kind of background against which Jesus spoke the parable of our lesson.

The Golden Text

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" It is a significant fact that one of the chief differences between the people of the Old Testament and those of the New is found in what is really meant by loving one's neighbor. Both Testaments contain the commandment that one shall love his neighbor as himself, but it appears that the people of the old covenant were wholly unable to grasp the meaning or to obey the injunction of the precept. It seems that they could not think of anyone as a neighbor who was not friendly to them.

But when the Bible teaches that men shall love their neighbors as themselves, it is not talking about the kind of love which seeks its own comfort and pleasure. Jesus makes that plain when he says, "If any man would come unto me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and who-

soever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." (See Matt 16: 24, 25.) It remained for Jesus to give the true meaning of both "love" and "neighbor."

The love which a child of God must have for his neighbor is the same as that which he has for himself, namely, a love which recognizes the dignity and worth of the human soul, and which realizes that this supreme product of creative power is in his hands, as it were, to bring to completion, or to ruin. Love for one's self and his neighbor is man's supreme duty; and since there is no respect of persons with God, it is the eternal obligation of each individual to have the same kind of interest in his fellow man that he has in himself. The Father is not willing that anyone should be lost, and if we are to be like him we must work for the salvation of others, as well as for our own.

The Text Explained

The Lawyer and His Questions

(Luke 10: 25-29)

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? This was the lawyer's first question, and it was purposely asked; and his motive for standing was doubtless to attract attention to himself. It is well to keep in mind the fact that the lawyers of the New Testament, such as the one now before us, were not "attorneys," as we understand the term, but men who were well versed in the law of Moses. They are often called "scribes" in the New Testament. (See Luke 11: 45-52; cf. Matt. 23: 13ff.)

The text says that this lawyer made "trial" of Jesus, which probably, although not necessarily, means that he was seeking to force him into some kind of awkward position. The very fact that he was unwilling to accept the Lord's answer which he knew to be correct strongly indicates that his motive in asking the question was not primarily for the purpose of learning the truth. But be that as it may, the question which he did ask is one of the greatest which can be addressed to a teacher of God's word. To live with God forever is worth more than the entire world itself. (See Matt. 16: 26.)

And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest

thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. The lawyer probably thought that Jesus would lay down some new rule for obtaining salvation, and he could therefore expose him as implying that the law of Moses was not sufficient for the instruction of those seeking eternal life. This appears to have been the reason why Jesus put his answer in the form of a question. This is one of the most effective ways of getting at the very heart of an insincere person, and also of exposing him to others. The lawyer claimed for himself a thorough knowledge of the law, and it was therefore essential that he answer this question correctly, which he did.

The question which the lawyer had asked, even granting that he was entirely sincere and desired information, was far too important to be dealt with merely by describing that which would be intellectually in harmony with one's thinking. Jesus therefore made an immediate and direct appeal to the man's conscience, and if he is honest the word of God will suffice; but if he is not he will try to raise a side-issue and turn the argument into another direction. That is, of course, what the lawyer attempted to do, but Jesus did not permit him to get away from the issue. The lawyer's answer was clear and decisive, containing, as it did, a summary of the law and the prophets (cf. Matt. 22: 34-40); and the question of obtaining eternal life must rest upon it. The lawyer had evidently received more than he had asked for.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. If the lawyer in question was like the scribes in general, he was a theorist instead of a doer of the law. (See Matt. 23.) And if this was true of him, then his probable purpose in asking the question regarding eternal life was to expose Jesus as one who had been disregarding the law in the "new" teaching which he was doing. But Jesus made plain his devotion to the law when he told the lawyer that he had correctly answered the question regarding what the law said; and when he bade him

do that, it put the lawyer in an embarrassing position; for it required action on his part, rather than mere theory.

But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? This was the lawyer's second question, and it was asked because he was compelled to ask it in order to justify himself and maintain his standing among his fellow scribes. This effort on the part of the lawyer was intended to turn the discussion away from him, and center it upon a theoretical question which had long occupied the minds of the Jewish leaders. Someone has called it the refuge of the stricken conscience which wants to evade that which has been brought straight before the moral sense. It reminds us of a similar effort on the part of the Samaritan woman, who sought to turn the attention of Jesus from her to a religious question when he had touched upon her own moral life. (See John 4: 9-20.) This practice is still common, as any thoughtful observer well knows. The Lord answered the lawyer's question, as the remainder of the lesson shows, but not in the manner in which he expected it.

The Jewish Attitude

(Luke 10: 30-32)

Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. The setting of this parable has led some commentators to think that Jesus may have been in or near Bethany when he spoke it. McGarvey and Pendleton note that "the road from Jerusalem to Jericho is eighteen miles long, and descends about 3,500 feet. About two miles from Jerusalem it passes through the village of Bethany, and for the rest of the eighteen miles it passes through desolate mountain ravines without any habitation save the inn, the ruins of which are still seen about half the way to Jericho. This district from that time till the present has been noted for robberies, and Jerome tells that the road was called the 'bloody way.'" While the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was real,

it will do no violence to the Scriptures to speak of it as life's road: and what we see upon it in the parable is still being done today.

It is well to note, before beginning the study of the parable itself, that Jesus did not give a direct answer to the lawyer's question regarding his neighbor. The question itself revealed a wrong attitude, and until that was cleared up, any specific answer which Jesus might have given would have left the wrong impression on the man who asked the question. If Jesus had said so and so is your neighbor, the lawyer would have immediately concluded that others were not his neighbors. That was the very error which Jesus wanted to get out of his mind. So, instead of giving a precise definition of a neighbor, Jesus showed him what it meant to be *neighborly*; and, in effect, told him that if he would manifest that spirit he would have no difficulty in knowing who was his neighbor.

If we look upon the parable now before us as portraying the road of life, it will be easy for us to see that three distinct philosophies of living, represented (1) by the robbers, (2) by the priest and the Levite, and (3) by the Samaritan. The robbers held the philosophy that what a man has the power to do, he has the right to do. Such people make their living by exploiting others; and they are not all called robbers. People such as these do not know the meaning of philanthropy; they love money more than they love men, and they do not hesitate to kill a man in order to get his money, or whatever else he may have which they want, including his good name.

The principle represented by these men leaves destruction and death in its path; and should it gain the supreme control of the world, human life would no longer be safe; and peace, happiness, and contentment would no longer be possible. In the scene now before us, evil is temporarily enthroned and allowed to exercise its will. No one can adequately describe the results which would follow, if relief could not be found from this way of life.

And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite

also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. These two men permitted the lawyer to see himself; for he saw in them those who knew the law, but did not practice it. The law required that no one should leave an animal, even an enemy's animal, in distress without some effort to relieve it; but how⁷ much more a man, presumably a Jewish brother! (Cf. Deut. 22: 1-4.) There may have been in the minds of the priest and the Levite excuses which they considered sufficient to justify their passing by the wounded man; but Jesus did not consider any of them worth mentioning: there was no justification for their conduct. (Cf. James 4: 17.)

The priest and the Levite represent the passive class in human society; and it is worthy of note that the character of a man cannot be adequately estimated until an opportunity for service is presented to him. (Cf. Matt. 25: 14-30.) No man could foretell what the men of this parable would do with their talents, until they were given a chance to use them. The priest and Levite had an opportunity to show mercy to the wounded man; for his condition presented a problem, the solution of which involved human duty; but they passed by on the other side, that is, on the other side of the road from where the stricken man was lying.

People of the passive class in human society refuse to assume any responsibility for the condition of the unfortunate; and, consequently, they feel no obligation to assist them. They may feel that other duties are more important; but whatever their thinking may be, they pass up the opportunity, and leave the problem unsolved. This class, unlike that which is represented by the robbers, does not actively harm society, but neither does it help. Such people would not kill a man for his money; but neither will they spend theirs to rescue him. (Cf. 1 John 3: 13-18.) The philosophy of this class may be summed up in these words: What I have is mine, and I will keep it; I am under no obligation to use it in the interest of others.

The Good Samaritan

(Luke 10: 33-37)

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and

when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. The class represented by the Samaritan are nearest like God; and in them love and sympathy find their highest expression. When they see the needy, they ask no questions; but, being "moved with compassion," they immediately set about to take care of them, and endeavor to help them solve their problem. (It is well to keep in mind in this connection that there is sometimes a vast difference between simply giving a man something, and in seeking to solve the problem in which his condition has involved him.)

To people like the good Samaritan, men, though strangers, mean more than money; and they are willing to invest not only their means, but their time and influence also, in an effort to save the unfortunate. Those of this class do not see in the New Testament a list of direct precepts, each of which is applicable to only one case; but rather a book of living prin-

ciples of universal application. And so, with a heart full of love for God and man, they have no trouble in finding occasion to put them into practice. Their philosophy is this: What I am and have belong to God, and I am willing to spend and be spent according to his pleasure and the needs of men. (Cf. Gal. 6: 10.)

Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. Instead of telling the lawyer that everybody is his neighbor, he presented a picture of the law of neighborliness at work in the Samaritan, and made it so beautiful that the scribe could not keep from commending it, even when found in a representative of a despised race. It should also be observed that Jesus, in teaching the lesson regarding one's neighbor, did not abuse the Jews or praise the Samaritan. He simply related an incident which could, and probably did, happen frequently. He made no comments, but presented a situation in which human beings played a part, recited each man's conduct, and then asked the lawyer to pass judgment; and he did not fail to get the lesson, even if he didn't speak the word "Samaritan."

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Discuss briefly the background against which this lesson was given.
What Old Testament book teaches a similar lesson?
With what kind of mental attitude did the lawyer ask his first question?
Why did he ask such a question?

The Golden Text

What was one of the chief differences between the peoples of the Old and New Testaments?
What does the Bible mean by loving one's neighbor?
What kind of love is this?
Why is this lesson so important. Discuss fully.

The Lawyer and His Questions

What was the lawyer's first question? and why did he ask it?
What is the meaning of the term "lawyer"?
What way did he make trial of Jesus? know that the question, in and of itself. Was important.

How did Jesus answer his question? and why?
What effect did the question of Jesus have on the lawyer? and why?
What was the lawyer's reply?
What did the reply contain?
When Jesus told him to go, and do likewise, how was the lawyer affected?
What was the lawyer's next move? and why did he make it?
What was he trying to justify?
Why is this kind of practice so common among religious people?

The Jewish Attitude

What does the parable suggest regarding the setting of the lesson?
Briefly describe the Jericho road.
Why didn't Christ give a direct answer to the lawyer's question?
How may we regard, with profit, the Jericho road?
What three philosophies of life are seen upon it?
Explain the philosophy which is represented by the robbers.
What would happen if there were no relief from it?
What lesson did the lawyer get from the priest and Levite?
What was their philosophy?

What is the best way to judge human character?
 Why do so many people follow after the way of the priest and Levite?

The Good Samaritan

Repeat the story of the good Samaritan.
 What attitude did he manifest?
 How is the giving of material assistance sometimes related to one's problem?

What philosophy of life does the Samaritan represent?
 How do such people regard the New Testament?
 After speaking the parable, what question did Jesus ask the lawyer?
 How did the lawyer answer it?
 Discuss in full the method which Jesus used in dealing with the lawyer?
 What is the value of parabolic teaching?
 How do we know that the lawyer got the lesson which Jesus gave?

Lesson VII—May 15, 1960

JESUS AND THE SABBATH

Lesson Text

Luke 13: 10-17

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day.

11 And behold, a woman that had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up.

12 And when Je'-sus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands upon her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue, being moved with indignation because Je'-sus had healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in

which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath.

15 But the Lord answered him, and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, *these* eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?

17 And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame: and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Golden Text.—*"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath"* (Mark 2: 27.)

Devotional Heading.—Col. 2: 16-23.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 9. M.....Observance of the Sabbath (Ex. 16: 22-30)
- May 10. T.....Sabbath a Sign to Israel (Ex. 31: 16, 17)
- May 11. W.....Ten Commandments (Ex. 31: 16, 17)
- May 12. T.....Punishment for Sabbath Violation (Num. 15: 32-36)
- May 13. F.....Christ Greater Than Moses (Heb. 3: 1-6)
- May 14. S.....Change in the Law. (Heb. 7: 11-25)
- May 15. S.....First Day of Week (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2)

Time.—A.D. 28.

Place.—Probably Peraea.

Persons.—Jesus, the afflicted woman, the ruler of the synagogue, and the multitude.

Introduction

The Jewish race, at the time that Jesus entered upon his public ministry, was so divided religiously and steeped in tradition that it was impossible for him to avoid conflict with the religious leaders and escape criticism and censure. His work was destined to be a struggle and a con-

flict from the very beginning, since he could not hope to agree with the various groups or enlist and maintain their full cooperation. It is a well known fact that Jesus made no effort to exclude any group from his audience, or to evade any important question. The efforts he made to

conceal himself were only for the purpose of protecting his own life until he had finished his work and perfected his plans.

While he was engaged in his personal ministry, Jesus frequently tested the institutions of that time by his standard, namely, their value in service to man. That was what he was doing when the incidents of the lesson now before us took place. The religious leaders among the Jews saw in the sabbath, as it applied to them, only a commandment to be observed, while Jesus looked upon it as something for the good of God's people. This difference in viewpoint made a discussion of the principle involved inevitable, and led, as was often the case in other instances too, to the clarifying of the issue by setting forth the will of God.

The Golden Text

"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." In order to understand this statement by Jesus, it will be necessary to distinguish between the *principle* of the sabbath, on the one hand, and the *application*, of the principle, on the other. When Jesus said that the sabbath was made for man, he was not talking about the application, that is, the Jewish sabbath, but of the principle itself. This seems clear and certain from the text in the original: "The sabbath was made for *the man*," that is, for the human race. See Thayer. Johnson, in commenting on this passage, says, "The Sabbath rest; that is, a rest of one day in seven was made for man, not for Jews only. This implies that it is to be a universal institution; that the good of man requires it, and that it is not an arbitrary enactment, but a wise and benevolent provision for the welfare of the race. Experience shows that men are happiest, most moral, most prosperous and healthiest where it is devoutly observed."

In the verse following the golden text, Jesus says that "the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath." This obviously cannot refer to the Jewish seventh-day sabbath, as such; for Jesus was as much obligated to keep the law of Moses, as any other man of his race. (Cf. Gal. 4: 4; Matt. 5: 17-20.) Jesus never encouraged any departures from what the law au-

As we look back upon the Jewish leaders of the days of Jesus here upon earth, we are prone to think that they were very foolish in many of the things which they did; but if we will only stop and think, it can be seen that in many things we are not much better than they were. It is true that we do not have a seventh-day sabbath as they did, but we do have the Lord's day, the *first* day of the week; and many of our attitudes and positions regarding the day set aside for us are probably just as foolish in the sight of the Lord as theirs were. The Jewish sabbath and the New Testament Lord's day are entirely different institutions, but they both rest upon the same principle, namely, a period of time set aside unto God.

thorized regarding the keeping of the sabbath. He sought to correct abuses, but did not countenance disobedience. But Jesus is the lord of the principle of the sabbath, that is, the sabbath itself. (Cf. Matt. 28: 18; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.) This is to say that he has the authority to say how the principle of the sabbath shall be observed during his reign, as well as the time of its observance.

The golden text, therefore, is the expression of a deep-seated, Divinely-implanted moral principle which is inseparable from man's well being. It does not rest merely on legal enactments, but on needs and sanctions which are rooted in the human heart and conscience. The sabbath about which Jesus spoke in this text belongs to those principles which are right within themselves, and which were in existence before any legislation regarding them was made. Marital infidelity, for example, is not wrong simply because it is forbidden by Biblical statutes; it is forbidden by Divine legislation because it is morally wrong. And in a similar manner, the principle of the sabbath, that is a portion of time which has been set aside unto God, whether the seventh day of the Old Testament, or the first day of the New, is not right and good for the race just because it is commanded, that is applied to the people; it was com-

manded because it is morally right and good.

Anyone who does not make a clear distinction in his thinking between the seventh-day sabbath of the Old Testament and the Lord's day of the New will find himself in a state of confusion regarding the question now before us. The *entire* law of Moses was taken out of the way when Christ died upon the cross, and no one today is authorized to keep any part

of that system. (Cf. Col. 2: 14-17.) Anything which Christians do today as matters of faith must rest upon the authority of the New Testament alone; and there is nothing in the New Testament which even remotely teaches that the Lord's day is to be observed after the manner of the Jewish sabbath. But who is ready to say that the Lord's day is not *his* day, and that it must be respected as such?

The Text Explained

Doing Good on the Sabbath

(Luke 13: 10-13)

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day. Jesus, during his Galilean ministry, customarily taught in the synagogues on the sabbath day (Luke 4: 16ff.). but the practice may have been somewhat curtailed following his retirement from that province. But whether it was or not, he took advantage of the opportunity afforded him on the occasion now before us. The people, generally speaking, may have been regular in their attendance at the synagogue, but it is fair to suppose that the interest was greatly increased when Jesus was there.

And behold, a woman that had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. If this verse is read in the light of verse 16, it is probably fair to assume that a wicked spirit, that is, a demon, was responsible for the curvature of the spine which afflicted this woman. This, however, is not certain; but whether or not it was due to demoniacal agency, Satan himself was responsible for her condition.

And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her. Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. There is no indication in the text that the woman came to the synagogue with the expectation of seeking a cure from her affliction. Jesus *saw* her, and translated his benevolent feeling for her into action. He not only blessed her, but also demonstrated that he was the Son of God, as he claimed to be (Cf. John 3: 1, 2; 20: 30, 31.) Although *Jesus* had healed her, she glorified *God* for

the blessing which had been bestowed upon her. (Cf. James 1: 17; Matt. 9: 8.)

There is a lesson here for every one of us. Jesus knows the infirmity³ of every person today, and the temptations which beset us all; and while he no longer performs miracles as he one time did, he is still interested in our welfare, and is willing to bless everyone who is willing to listen to him. And when once his blessings have been received, we can show our gratitude in no better way than to glorify God and give ourselves into his service.

An Indignant Reaction

(Luke 13: 14)

And the ruler of the synagogue, being moved with indignation because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath. Some Bible students have suggested that the ruler of the synagogue was indignant, not so much at sabbath violation, as at the glorification of Jesus. But if he had only stopped to think he could easily have seen that Christ had to have the approval of God in order to perform such a miracle. It is a noticeable fact that the ruler did not criticize Jesus directly, but sought circuitously to reach him through the people. He was too cowardly to rebuke Jesus openly, and was not generous enough to offer his good wishes to the woman who had been relieved of a great affliction.

It seems that some people cannot appreciate a good deed, unless it is accomplished according to their way of thinking. It would have been proper, of course, for the synagogue

ruler to speak out against any law violation, or alleged violation, had he been sincere; but it is obvious from the context that such was not the case. His principal aim, undoubtedly, was to condemn Jesus, because the people were following him instead of the Jewish leaders. Envy can cause men to bring injury upon themselves far greater than that which they seek to inflict upon others.

It was true in the days of Jesus, and it is still true, that many who claim to be followers of the Lord register their opposition to good works on the basis of their professed regard for the purity of religion; but they, like the ruler now before us, have formed their notions of religion as being something entirely different from doing good. Such people have a form of godliness, while denying its power. But God has always desired mercy, rather than sacrifice. (Cf. Matt. 9: 10-13; Hos. 6: 6.)

The Lord's Defense

(Luke 13: 15-17)

But the Lord answered him, and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? Jesus frequently used this epithet to characterize the Jewish leaders of his day, and here he applies it, not only to the rulers of the synagogue who had spoken against his good deed, but also to those who were associated with him. They are called "adversaries" later on in the text.

McGarvey and Pendleton point out that the hypocrisy of these Jewish leaders is manifested in two ways: (1) They were disguising their hatred for Jesus under a pretended zeal for sabbath observance; and (2) their zeal for the sabbath was at no time sincere, for they favored indulgence where their own interests were involved, but demanded strict adherence to the letter of the law where others were concerned. It should be carefully noted that it was their tradition, and not the law of the sabbath, which Jesus had broken; and since that was true, he offered no other justification of his conduct than to show that he was guiltless under a fair application of their own precedents.

And ought not this woman, being a

daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath? Jesus said, in effect. You condemn me for doing something which ye do not hesitate to do, but with this difference: You condemn me for doing to a woman that which you do to a beast. You will lead an ox or an ass from a comfortable stall, where it has been for only a short time at best, since the previous watering, to give it a drink, but condemn me for releasing a woman who had been bound by the devil for eighteen years, so that she might enjoy health once again. His probable reason for mentioning the fact that she was a daughter of Abraham was because, according to their notion, it made her worthy of every consideration for her welfare. (Cf. Luke 19: 9.)

There was another instance similar to this one, in the earlier ministry of Jesus, when he taught that it is right to do good on the sabbath day. "And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue: and behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day." (Matt. 12: 9-12.)

The rules of the scribes and Pharisees had made the sabbath question simply one of doing or not doing. But Jesus made it a question of doing good; and the question which he asked on that occasion implies that a failure to do good, when one has the power and the opportunity, is nothing short of sinful. Someone has said that the ability to do good imposes an obligation to do it. This is in keeping with God's purpose in giving the sabbath to mankind, as stated by Jesus in the golden text. It was never his intention that man should simply keep a form to the extent he could not do good when the opportunity presented itself.

The evident reason for requiring the Jews to refrain from their usual activity on the sabbath day, and

spend the day in all but complete idleness, was to teach them the meaning of the sabbath. It was a cessation, a ceasing to do that which one had been doing. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of Jehovah honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; . . . (Isa. 58: 13, 14.) This is the spirit of true sabbath observance; and that was what God required of his people—the turning from their ways to him and his ways.

It is well to keep in mind the fact that Isaiah, in the closing part of his prophecy, was speaking of the Messianic kingdom. David Lipscomb seems to have caught the true meaning of this principle when he notes that in the Old Testament we are taught how God applies his laws or deals with his people, while in the New Testament his perfect laws are given. This is the central idea in our lesson today; for as any informed student of the New Testament knows, we are under no obligation whatsoever to keep the Jewish sabbath. But there is something called the "sabbath" in the golden text which Jesus says was made for man—"the" man, that is, mankind.

In the final paragraph of Isaiah's prophecy, we read, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and

your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah." (Isa. 66: 22, 23.) This, obviously, cannot refer to the law of Moses; for "all flesh" were never commanded to keep the Jewish sabbath. And neither can it refer to the world to come; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." It can only refer to the new creation in Christ, and, particularly, the Lord's day.

If we should ask, How should the Lord's day be used by Christians, the answer is, The very manner in which the day is designated shows, beyond all reasonable doubt, that it should be consecrated wholly to the worship and service of the Lord. That which belongs to one person does not belong to another; and that which belongs to God does not belong to man, any further that he has delegated to him the right to use it. Milligan notes that a thousand precepts like that of the fourth commandment could not more clearly and specifically express God's *reserved right* to this portion of time than the name by which he has seen fit to designate it.

And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame: and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. This appears to be an accurate and graphic account of the result of the Lord's power and irresistible words which were manifested and spoken on the occasion which the text describes.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What was the condition of the Jewish race when Christ began his ministry?
What did he frequently do regarding the institutions of his day?
How did he and the Pharisees regard the sabbath?
Give a clear distinction between the Old Testament sabbath and the Lord's day of the New Testament.

The Golden Text

What is absolutely necessary in order to understand the golden text?
What sabbath was made for man? and what man?
What did Jesus mean by saying that he is the lord of the sabbath?

Was he under obligation to keep the Jewish sabbath? Give reason for your answer.
What is meant by the "principle" of the sabbath?
How was this principle applied to the Jews? to Christians?
How much of the law of Moses was taken out of the way when Christ died on the cross? Give proof of your answer.

Doing Good on the Sabbath

What did Jesus teach in the synagogues on the sabbath day?
What happened on the day of our lesson which is of particular interest?
What was the peculiar affliction of the woman involved?
Why did Jesus heal her? and why did she glorify God?
What lesson is there in this incident for us?

An Indignant Reaction

What was it which moved the ruler of the synagogue to indignation?

What should his reaction have been?

How did he register his feeling regarding the matter?

What was he evidently trying to do?

Why do some people often criticize good deeds as religious violations?

The Lord's Defense

How did Jesus reply to the criticism of the synagogue ruler?

Why did he call him and his associates hypocrites?

What is the literal meaning of "hypocrite."

In what ways did the Jewish leaders manifest their hypocrisy?

Show that it was their tradition and not the law that Jesus violated.

What comparison did Jesus make in his reply?

Why mention the fact that the woman was

a daughter of Abraham?

On what other occasion did a similar incident take place?

Why was it right to do good on the sabbath day?

Why did the Jewish leaders object to that?

Why were the Jews required to refrain from work on the sabbath?

What is the spirit of true sabbath observance?

How are the Old and New Testaments related in the scheme of redemption?

Why is it important that we study the lesson now before us?

What prophecy did Isaiah give regarding this?

How do we know that he was not speaking of the Jewish sabbath?

How should Christians use the Lord's day now?

What is implied in the term "Lord's" day?

What effect did the Lord's answer have on his adversaries?

Lesson VIII—May 22, 1960

THE GREAT SUPPER

Lesson Text

Luke 14: 15-24

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

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

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

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

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

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame.

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

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

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

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 16. M.....Some Invited Not Worthy (Matt. 22: 1-14)
- May 17. T.....Invitation to All (Matt. 11: 28-30)
- May 18. W.....God No Respector of Persons (Acts 10: 34-38)
- May 19. T.....Jesus, Friend of All (Luke 5: 27-32)
- May 20. F.....Worth of Mankind (Matt. 12: 9-14)
- May 21. S.....Soul's Need (John 4: 7-14)
- May 22. S.....Joy of Redeemed People (Rev. 7: 9-12)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Probably Peraea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his host, and other guests at meat.

Introduction

The parable which we are to study today grew out of circumstances which are carefully explained by Luke. Jesus had been invited into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on the sabbath to eat bread. That, in and of itself, would appear to be a courteous act on the part of the host, but the very next words of the record indicate that the spirit of cordiality was not at its best, to say the least of it; for "they were watching him." They were evidently curious to see what he would say and do; and were on the alert to take advantage of anything which might enable them to bring an accusation against him.

But Jesus, as was his usual practice, took the situation in hand and in a very short time had the others at the table on the defensive. There was a man before Jesus who had the dropsy. This man probably came into the place where they were eating uninvited, pretty much as the sinful woman of Luke 7: 39-50. He probably heard that Jesus was there, and came in the hope that the Lord might

have compassion on him, and heal him. At any rate, he was there, and Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees the direct question, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?" But when no one ventured to speak, Jesus healed the man and put all the table to silence.

And then when Jesus observed how the guests in the Pharisee's house were seeking for themselves the best seats, he spoke unto them a parable which commended to them a spirit of humility which was willing to take the lowest seat; and then if it should be necessary to move at all, it would be to a higher place. This advice was followed by a recommendation that when any of them made a dinner or a supper, they should invite the people who would be unable to recompense them; and in that way they would be recompensed of God in the last great day. In all of these remarks Jesus addressed himself to the conscience of his hearers, with the result that criticism was disarmed and opposition silenced.

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson will be considered in the body of the text,

since that is where the golden text is found.

The Text Explained

The Occasion for the Parable

(Luke 14: 15)

And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. The remark of this guest grew out of that which Jesus had just said about inviting the poor and unfortunate to the supper, and the blessings which would follow. This probably caused him to think of the coming Messianic kingdom, as they supposed it to be, and of the feast with which it would be ushered in. This could hardly refer to heaven; for there will be no such feasts there. The confident anticipation which characterized the guest who thus spoke no doubt grew out of the fact that the Jews fully expected to have part in that feast. It was this erroneous view and false expectation which Jesus sought to correct in the parable which follows.

This is a lesson which needs to be

stressed over and over again. There are multiplied thousands of people who confidently expect to enjoy the glories of the world to come, who will never get there; for the simple reason that they are unwilling to meet the Lord's condition, and offer excuse after excuse for not doing so. It appears that relatively few people are willing to examine themselves and their conduct in the light of the revealed standard which the Lord has made available to every one for that purpose. (Cf. 2 Cor. 13: 5; Matt. 7: 21-23; John 12: 48-50.)

The Slighted Invitation

(Luke 14: 16-21a)

But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many; and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. Those who read the New Testament find little

difficulty in understanding this parable. The man who made the supper represents God who desires the salvation of everyone. (Cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9.) The supper itself stands for the provisions which he made for the salvation of all men. While the invitation signifies the offers which he made to men, and particularly the Jews. (Cf. Matt. 22: 1-14.) The custom of sending a second message to the invited guests to tell them when the feast was ready was customary in that country. (Cf. Esth. 5: 8; 6: 14.)

William M. Thomson, in commenting on this second message, says, "The friend at whose house we dined last evening sent a servant to call us when dinner was ready. Is this custom strictly observed by all classes in the community, at the present day?"

"Not very generally amongst the common people, nor in cities, where European manner have greatly modified the Oriental; but on Lebanon it still prevails. If a sheikh, beg, or emir invites, he sends a servant at the proper time. This servant often repeats the formula mentioned in Luke 14: 17: 'Come; for all things are now ready,' or the supper is ready. The fact that this custom is mainly confined to the wealthy and to the nobility is in agreement with the same parable, where the certain man 'who made a great supper, and bade many,' was presumably of that class. It is true now, as then, that to refuse is an affront to the maker of the feast, nor would such excuses as those in the parable be more acceptable to a Druse emir than they were to the lord of that 'great supper'; very few, however, would manifest their displeasure by sending servants into the highways and hedges after the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind." (*The Land and the Book*, Vol. III, p. 74.)

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Various commentators

have pointed out that these excuses reveal some specific conditions in the lives of those who made them. For example, these men made engagements which they used as excuses for not going to the feast, and they made them without any regard for the hour of the banquet to which they had already been invited. They also set little value upon either the friendship of the man who had invited them, or the feast which he had provided for their enjoyment. The three excuses which were offered made steady progress in disrespect: the first was offered on *the ground of necessity*; the second simply offered *a reason*; while the third is almost *impudent in its bluntness*.

If we look at these excuses from the spiritual viewpoint, we note that each one contains an element of *newness*—new field, new oxen, new wife. Thus the things of earth seem new and more to be desired, when they are compared with the gospel invitation. Furthermore, all the excuses are trifling; for the parable is designed to teach that men forego their rights to heaven for things of little value when placed beside the things of eternity. (Cf. Matt. 16: 24-26.) It is also noticeable that the things which people must *hate*, if they please the Lord, would have eliminated all of the excuses which were made. (Cf. Luke 14: 25, 26.) It is possible that Paul had this kind of a situation in mind when he wrote 1 Cor. 7: 29-34a. The three excuses warn us not to be hindered (1) by the love of possessions; (2) by the affairs of business; and (3) by our family or social ties. (Cf. Matt. 10: 34-39.)

The term "consent" is not in the original, as the italics indicate. It was added by the translators, but its meaning may not be clear to everyone. Phillips renders the passage in these words, "But they all, as one man, began to make their excuses." The idea is that the three men were animated by one spirit, moved by one impulse, or were influenced by the same disposition in making their excuses. Each one considered the thing which he did as being more important than the enjoyment of the feast. The things which they did were not evil, in and of themselves; but they became so when they were

put before things which were more important. (Cf. Matt. 6: 33.) All of the men could have done the things which they did, without making their prior obligation subservient to them. They simply did not want to go. (Cf. John 5: 40.)

It is interesting to note that the teaching of the Bible is applicable to men in all ages of the world. People today manifest the very same attitude toward the gospel which was manifested by the men of the parable now under consideration. When the excuses which are now offered for not obeying the gospel are analyzed, it will be seen that those who make them are motivated by the very same principles which prompted the men of our lesson this morning. Such people want something else more than they want the things of God. But here is something which they should consider: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." (Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

The Lord's Reaction

(Luke 14: 21b-24)

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. There are several lessons in this part of the parable which should be emphasized. First, as in the case of the similar lesson in Matt. 22: 1-14, the men who were originally invited to the feast made light of the man's invitation. This, of course, refers primarily to the treatment which the Jews gave to God's offer to them. They were more interested in having their way about things than they were in learning and doing the will of God. The Old Testament scriptures had plainly revealed that which God proposed to do

for them, but they had misread that part of God's revelation; and when Jesus came and explained to them exactly what God wanted them to do, they were in no mood to listen to him. This condition prevails even today, as may be seen by any careful observer. But no man can trifle with the Eternal and escape the damnation of hell. The rejecters of Christ will be eternally rejected by him. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we should drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 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; 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." (Heb. 2: 1-4.)

Some Bible students see in the wording of the parable three groups to whom the Lord's invitation was sent. (1) Those who were originally invited—the Jewish leaders; and then when they failed to go, (2) the neglected class among the Jews, the poor and maimed and blind and lame—the publicans and sinners; and (3) those in the highways and hedges—the Gentiles. This is the view of William M. Taylor, McGarvey and Pendleton, et al. McGarvey and Pendleton note that "we have here a preliminary or general invitation followed by three special invitations. We may regard the general invitation as given by Moses and the prophets in the ages before the feast was prepared. The first special one was given by John the Baptist and Christ to the Jewish nation in the first stages of Christ's ministry. The second special invitation was given by Christ, the twelve and the seventy, and came more especially to the poor and outcast, the publicans and sinners, because the leading men of the nation spurned the invitation. The third invitation was begun by the apostles after the Lord's ascension and is still borne forward by those who have come after them and includes all nations. The three conditions of Jew,

outcast and Gentile are indicated by the three orders of guests. 1. The honorable citizens of the city; 2. Those who frequent the streets and lanes, but are still in and of the city; 3. Those who live without the city and are found upon the highways and in the hedgepaths of the vineyards and gardens. The second and third classes are depicted as needing to be constrained. This would be so, because they would hold themselves unworthy of the invitation. But they were to be constrained by moral and not by physical means. (Matt. 14: 22; 2 Cor. 12: 11; Gal. 2: 14.) Physical constraint would have been contrary to all custom, as well as impossible to one servant."

"And yet there is room." Some people have wondered if there is enough room for all the righteous to enjoy the bliss of the world to come, but there is no need for concern here; for there will always be room as long as there is a single sinner who desires to be with God. Bengel notes that "nature and grace alike abhor a vacuum." In the words of Barnes, There is a banquet there which no number can exhaust; fountains which no number can drink dry; and always places for others to occupy. This glad news and urgent demand on the part of the Lord should make every child of God try harder to bring others to Christ. God does not want anyone to be lost, and he will always be able to take care of any who want to be saved.

The emphasis in the text is on the work of the master's servant whom he commanded to take the invitation to people of all classes, and wherever they could be found; but the Bible also teaches that the people who hear also have a responsibility. We know that is true from what happened to those who made excuses. "For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." It is a fearful thing for one to reject the Lord's invitation. We have already seen something of what that

means in Heb. 2: 1-4. The Gentiles today enjoy the privileges which were once vouchsafed only to the Jews, and their responsibility is just as great in the Lord's sight as was that of the Jews. That is what Paul told the Gentiles in Rom. 11: 19-23.

"Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by *thy* faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again." There is a lesson which every responsible person should learn, namely, with God there is no respect of persons. Every man will be held accountable for his opportunity.

Some men have endeavored to find fault with God for sending people to an eternal hell; but they have completely missed the point. The parable now under consideration pictures the Lord as making every possible effort to get men to come to the banquet table. Taylor asks, "Where shall we find gentleness, self-sacrifice, and consideration for the human race, such as Christ has manifested? If there had been any possibility of averting this doom from impenitent unbelievers, we may be sure that he would have availed himself of it on their behalf; but if he speaks in this fashion, then their destruction must be inevitable. Yes, and it must be not only in harmony with justice, but with love. Now, we have heard the gospel, we are constantly hearing it. Let us beware, therefore, lest, by neglecting the great salvation, we become examples of its terrible realization." (Cf. Isa. 55: 6, 7.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Against what background did Jesus speak the parable now before us?

What was the general atmosphere surrounding the dinner where Jesus was?
How did Jesus deal with the situation?
Why didn't the scribes and Pharisees answer his question?
What lesson did Jesus teach them regarding humility?

The Occasion for the Parable

What remark did one of the guests make?
and why?
What did he mean by the "kingdom of
God"?

What ideas did the Jews have regarding
it?

What confidence did he seem to express?
Why is this lesson so important?
Why are so few people willing to examine
themselves in the light of the Scrip-
tures?

The Slighted Invitation

What is the general lesson of the parable
now before us?

Why was a second message sent to the
invited guests?

What did they begin to do?

What do such excuses reveal in those who
make them?

What did they demonstrate regarding their
attitude?

What is their spiritual significance?

What warning do they have for us all?

What spirit governed the excuse-making?

Was it wrong for them to buy land, oxen,
and marry?

Wherein did their sin lie?

What lesson is there here for us?

What important lesson should we all re-
member?

The Lord's Reaction

Why did the master of the house become
angry?

What was the primary application of the
parable?

Why were the people so unwilling to listen
to Jesus?

Are people today any different? Give rea-
sons for your answer.

What will be the fate of all triflers with
God's mercy?

How did the writer of Hebrews empha-
size this lesson?

What three groups of people received the
Lord's invitation?

Why did some of them have to be con-
strained?

Are we included in the invitation? Give
reasons for your answer.

What is signified by the statement "and
yet there is room"?

What effect should this truth have on
every child of God?

What responsibility rests upon the "serv-
ant" and upon the invited guests?

What will be the result of refusing the
Lord's invitation?

What does Paul teach regarding the re-
sponsibility of the Gentiles?

What is meant by the statement that God
is no respecter of persons?

How should we be affected by this truth?
Discuss fully.

Why do some people endeavor to find
fault with God for punishing the wicked?

Wherein do they miss the point?

How does God show his great love for
lost humanity?

What are all men exhorted to do?

Lesson IX—May 29, 1960

THE PRODIGAL SON

Lesson Text

Luke 15: 11-24

11 And he said, A certain man had
two sons:

12 And the younger of them said
to his father, Father, give me the
portion of *thy* substance that falleth
to me. And he divided unto them his
living.

13 And not many days after, the
younger son gathered all together
and took his journey into a far coun-
try; and there he wasted his sub-
stance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all,
there arose a mighty famine in that
country; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself
to one of the citizens of that country;
and he sent him into his fields to feed
swine.

16 And he would fain have filled
his belly with the husks that the
swine did eat: and no man gave unto
him.

17 But when he came to himself
he said, How many hired servants of
my father's have bread enough and
to spare, and I perish here with hun-
ger!

18 I will arise and go to my father,
and will say unto him, Father, I have
sinned against heaven, and in thy
sight:

19 I am no more worthy to be
called thy son: make me as one of
thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his
father. But while he was yet afar off,
his father saw him, and was moved
with compassion, and ran, and fell on
his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Fa-
ther, I have sinned against heaven,
and in thy sight: I am no more
worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his serv-
ants, Bring forth quickly the best
robe, and put it on him; and put a
ring on his hand, and shoes on his
feet:

23 And bring the fatted calf, *and*
kill it, and let us eat, and make
merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and
is alive again; he was lost, and is
found. And they began to be merry.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”* (Luke 15: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 143: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

May 23. M.....	Revelation of Love (John 3: 11-21)
May 24. T.....	Response of Love (1 John 4: 7-21)
May 25. W.....	Riches of Love (Eph. 2: 1-10)
May 26. Th.....	Extent of Love (Rom. 8: 31-39)
May 27. F.....	Reproof of Love (Rev. 3: 14-22)
May 28. S.....	Test of Love (1 John 5: 1-3)
May 29. S.....	Sonship Through Love (1 John 3: 1-4)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Probably in Peraea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the publicans and sinners, and the scribes and Pharisees.

It is assumed that the apostles were also present.

Introduction

The parable of the prodigal son has, by common consent, come to be regarded as the pearl of all the parables of Jesus—the heart of the gospel of Christ. It is one of a series of four parables, found in Luke 15, the design of which was to rebuke the “cold-hearted and self-righteous exclusiveness of the scribes and Pharisees; and to show them, that, in despising Jesus for receiving sinners and eating with them, they were altogether out of harmony with him in whose presence there is joy over one sinner that repenteth.”

But this parable differs from the first two in that, while they illustrate the earnestness with which God seeks the lost sinner, this one describes the results of that search in the voluntary return of the sinner himself. The first two view the matter from the divine side and permit us to see the efforts which God has put forth through his Son to recover the lost, while this one presents the human side and shows us the sinners part in returning to the Father. We are not to understand that some people are saved after the manner of the lost sheep, and others after the manner of the prodigal son; not that the

Saviour brings one home by his divine power, while the other comes of his own accord. Both of these processes are accomplished in every conversion. The man comes, yet Christ brings him; Christ brings, yet he comes.

It will also be observed that in the first two parables of the chapter, little or nothing is said of the sinner’s departure from God, and his misery and degradation in his estrangement from the Father. The loss which the first two parables emphasize is that which is sustained by God; and scarcely any hint is given in either of them of the loss which is incurred by the sinner himself. But in the parable now before us the deplorable condition of the man away from God, in the far-away land of sin, is set in the forefront; and nowhere in the whole range of literature do we have a more vivid picture of the awful truth that “the way of the transgressor is hard,” than that which is presented to us in this matchless story. The unmistakable message of the parable is the hunger of the heart of God for the return of the prodigal, and the hunger at the heart of the prodigal for his Father and home.

The Golden Text

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” Barnes notes that it is a principle of human nature that the recovery of something which is in danger of being lost affords much more intense joy than the quiet possession of many things which are safe. It is for this reason that we rejoice

in our health when we have recovered from a dangerous illness; or why we rejoice over a child who has been rescued from disease or danger more than over those who are in health and safety. This is the feeling which Jesus represents as existing in heaven when the lost are recovered.

At the end of the first three para-

bles of the chapter from which our text is taken mention is made of the joy which followed the finding of the lost. The joy at finding the lost sheep and the lost coin is used to illustrate the joy of heaven when sinners turn to God. "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance." *Those who need no repentance* probably refer to the claims of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, since the parables were spoken because of their murmuring against Jesus. This does not mean that they actually did not need to repent. But since they felt that they were too good to associate with self-confessed sinners, Jesus wanted them to know how God re-

garded the salvation of the lost, in contrast with their self-righteousness.

But since there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, both saint and sinner should consider what that truth involves. It means that every lost person has the opportunity of causing joy in heaven itself, to say nothing of the joy here on earth; and that every child of God is privileged, not only to share in that joy, but also to have a part in bringing it about. There is, therefore, no greater work in which mankind can engage than that of saving the lost. The parable of the elder brother, at the close of the chapter, is a picture of the professed child of God who has no interest in the lost or their salvation.

The Text Explained

Indulgence and Misery

(Luke 15: 11-16)

And he said, A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. This story is not told primarily for its literal truth and pathos, exquisite as they are, but for its spiritual significance which underlies its external incidents; and every man may see himself in this prodigal son, although the primary reference was probably to the scribes and Pharisees, as the elder brother, and the publicans and sinners, as the younger son. The father, of course, represents God.

The son whom we call the prodigal became weary of the wholesome restraints of the parental household; he wanted to be his own master and thereby be independent of all authority and interference. Sin is but a departure from God, a desire to be independent of him, a casting off of our allegiance, a taking of things into our own hands, and a determination to do as we please. All good things we have come from God (James 1: 17), and instead of being content to use them in his service, we often want all the blessings of God, such as life, talents, favorable surroundings, etc., for selfish purposes. (Cf. Acts 14: 16.)

This self-seeking is the first step in the downward course of sin. It grows out of a wrong attitude toward

God. In the case of the parable, the father allows the son to have his own way; for that is frequently the only way one can be brought to see the right. There are some lessons which experience alone can teach. According to the Jewish law, the younger son, where only two were involved, would be entitled to one third of the goods. (Cf. Deut. 21: 17.)

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. The experiences of this young man present a vivid picture of the three stages of the sinner's progress in the paths of wrong-doing. 1. *His riotous joy.* There is a sort of pleasure in sinful practices. If that were not so, men would not be engaging in them so freely. (See 2 Pet. 2: 12-15; cf. 1 Pet. 4: 1-4.) 2. *Wasted substance.* A sinful life is the most expensive thing possible. It results in one's material resources, wears out the body, blights the intellect, withers the moral nature, weakens the will, blunts the conscience, and hardens the heart.

(Cf. Heb. 3: 13; Eph. 4: 17-19; Rom. 1: 28.) One's influence might be used to save a soul; but as it is, the sinner is in danger of losing his own. 3. **Enslaved degradation.** Inasmuch as the world cannot satisfy the soul, sinful practices will, sooner or later, lose their charm. But worse still, the sinner will eventually find himself firmly caught in the clutches of sin. (See John 8: 34; 2 Pet. 2: 18, 19.)

In commenting on this condition, William M. Taylor says, "That which was at first a joy becomes at the end a bondage. That which was at first a pleasant companion becomes at length a cruel taskmaster, who compels him to make brick without straw, and sometimes even without clay. I have read in the memoirs of a detective, how once, having discovered his man, he joined himself to him as a boon companion, went with him to his haunts, secured his confidence by long fellowship, until at length, when all suspicion had been allayed, he got him, as a mere jest, to try on a pair of handcuffs, and then, snapping the spring that locked them, he took him, all helpless as he was, an easy prey. So sin does with its victim. It first ministers to his enjoyment, then drowns his vigilance, and then leads him away in helpless bondage to utter ruin."

The word "joined" means to *glue* or *cement*, implying that the prodigal son, in his desperation, forced himself upon the citizen in question, who was unwilling to engage him; and who only because of his persistent entreaty took him into his service. Thomson notes that the "husks" — misnomer—are fleshy pods somewhat like those of the locust-tree, from six to ten inches long, containing several seeds, and lined with a gelatinous substance, sweet and pleasant to the taste when thoroughly ripe. The young man would have eaten the food which he was feeding to the swine, if he had had the opportunity. He had now reached the lowest depths of degradation; and he must have realized how unstable are the friends and principles which money can buy.

Reflection and Repentance

(Luke 15: 17-20a)

But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to

spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. When once the blinded eyes of the soul are opened, no one is content to abide in sin. The arresting statement, "But when he came to himself," suggests that the young man had not been himself while engaged in sin. He had been under the influence of another, namely, Satan; but now after his tragic experience he had regained his senses.

One of the first evidences which the sinner gives that his eyes have been opened is seen in the perception of his misery. This, of course, will lead to reflection; and there is hope for the worst of men, if only they can be induced to reflect on their condition. Let us ask, then, On what did the prodigal son reflect? 1. He reflected on the condition in which he found himself; and that is what every sinner should do. 2. He reflected on his past errors, follies, and sins. 3. He recalled the privileges and blessings of the home on which he had so lightly turned his back.

It was while thinking about the things just mentioned that he repented of his sins. Repentance is a change of mind regarding sin, or, in keeping with the idea of the text, repentance is to have *another mind* regarding sin. Repentance is not forsaking sin; that is the result of repentance. It is to have another mind regarding sin, to think about it in a different way from the way he first thought of it. It implies a true knowledge of sin, and a conviction of sin, with its folly, guilt, condemnation, and terrible consequences. It means that the sinner changes his thoughts and attitudes, insofar as they are wrong, toward God, Christ, his fellow man, and himself. Repentance is brought about by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7: 10), and it inevitably leads to a change in conduct. (Cf. Matt. 21: 28, 29.) Repentance in the parable now before us is pictured as a journey, and the prodigal son struck while the iron was hot.

Forgiveness and Restoration

(Luke 15: 20b-24)

But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 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. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The meaning of this part of the parable is that the heavenly Father will receive the penitent with gladness, and, instead of taunting him with his guilt, he will honor him by giving him the richest blessings he has to bestow.

James Hastings says that in this wonderful picture Jesus has given us the most attractive and most perfect image of God that came from his lips. That longing and looking for his lost one's return; the going out to meet him; the kiss of welcome and the fond embrace; the prompt, frank, and complete forgiveness; the utter silence and forgetfulness concerning the evil and shameful past, as if it had never been; the festal robes and the rejoicing guests; the infinite tenderness, delicacy, and sweetness of it all, making up an appealing and affecting portrait which chains our admiration, stirs our deepest hearts, and goes beyond all thought. We feel that there is something far more than human in this. It is the beauty of God; it is the unspeakable grace of the Divine Fatherhood; and it is the great, pitiful, forgiving heart of God that the story brings to view, and that stands forever prominent in our thoughts of it.

Although the prodigal sinned, as the parable shows, the father's heart never changed. The responsibility, therefore, for the separation between God and man has always been on the side of man. This truth is made plain in both the Old and New Testaments. "Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated be-

tween you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isa. 59: 1,

2.) "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5: 18-20.)

The father's welcome always exceeds the wanderer's fondest dream, and the new life always begins with a feast of love. (Cf. Acts 8: 8, 39; 1 Pet. 1: 8.) In his book, *Leaves for Quiet Hours*, George Matheson says, "There are no degrees of forgiveness. There are degrees in the holiness that follows forgiveness; but pardon must be perfect at its birth. Forgiveness restores each man to the place he had before he fell. If the prodigal had been a hired servant previous to his fall, he would have been made a hired servant again. There would have been no sting in that; it would have involved no stigma. But to make him a servant after he had been a son would have perpetuated the pain of memory. Nothing impedes my progress like the remembrance of a dark yesterday. When the page is already blotted, I am apt to blot it more. I lose heart; I say, 'It is already tarnished; what does it matter now?' If I am to get a fair start, it must be a bright start—a start with the ring and the robe. It will not help me that you lift me from the far country if you give me a place second to my former self. The second place is my yesterday, and I should walk by its darkness. It would dog my footsteps; it would never let me go.

I should not feel that sin was unworthy of me—below me. I should always be fingering my ticket of leaves. I should never be able to soar for the remembrance of the irons; memory would clip the wings of hope."

Someone has said that it is this unshaken certainty of the Fatherhood of God that can save man at his worst from despair. God's forgiveness is not indeed weakness, an easy over-

looking of sin. To know what sin is in itself must make that thought impossible. But forgiveness is God's

delight in seeing his children realize their sonship; it is God's welcome home to them.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Tell something of the setting of this parable and why it was spoken.
In what way does it diner from the two which precede it?
What is the overall picture of the three parables together?

The Golden Text

Why is there so much joy over one sinner that repenteth?
What is the principle behind all of this?
What place does joy have in the lesson before us?
Who is it that needs no repentance?
How should both saint and sinner regard the fact that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God when a sinner repents?
Why is soul-saving such a great work?
What lesson does the elder brother illustrate?

Indulgence and Misery

Why does the parable of the prodigal son have such a wide appeal?
What was its primary representation?
Why did the younger son want to leave home?
What lesson does that illustrate?
Why didn't the father try to prevent his going away?
How much of the estate was he entitled to?
What picture does the experience of the prodigal present?
What are the three stages in the sinner's progress in the paths of wrong-doing?
In what sense is there pleasure in sin?
Why is a sinful life so expensive?

How does one become the bondservant of sin?
What was meant by saying that the prodigal "joined" himself to a man of the far away country?
What was the feed of the swine? and why didn't the young man eat it?
What must have been his thoughts at this time?

Reflection and Repentance

What always makes the sinner dissatisfied with his way of life?
In what sense did the prodigal come to himself?
What is the first sign that the sinner has come to himself?
What does this realization lead to?
On what did the prodigal reflect?
When did he repent?
What is the basic idea in repentance?
How is it brought about? and what is godly sorrow?
In what does genuine repentance always result?

Forgiveness and Restoration

What is God's attitude toward those who are in sin?
What does he always do when they start home
Discuss the picture of God which Jesus paints in this parable.
Who is responsible for the estrangement between God and man?
Show what both the Old and New Testaments teach regarding this.
In what way does the father's welcome exceed the sinner's dream?
Why was the prodigal restored to his former place?
What is the great appeal in the story we have just studied?
Is the forgiveness of sins an act of weakness? Give reasons for your answer.

Lesson X—June 5, 1960

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Lesson Text

Luke 16: 19-31

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

20 And a certain beggar named Laz'-a-rus was laid at his gate, full of sores,

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

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

23 And in Ha'-des he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Laz'-a-rus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Laz'-a-rus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Laz'-a-rus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.

27 And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house;

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they

also come into this place of torment.

29 But Abraham saith, They have Mó'ses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Mó'ses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if if one rise from the dead.

Golden Text.—*“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal”* (Matt. 6: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 3: 13-18.

Daily Bible Readings

May 30. M.....	Foolish Trust in Riches (Psalm 49: 6-13)
May 31. T.....	Danger of Riches (Matt. 19: 16-22)
June 1. W.....	Winning the True Riches (Matt. 19: 23-30)
June 2. T.....	Praying for True Riches (Eph. 3: 14-21)
June 3. F.....	Treasure in Heaven (Matt. 6: 16-23)
June 4. S.....	The True Riches (Eph. 3: 1-13)
June 5. S.....	Tragic End (Matt. 21: 41-46)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Probably in Perea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the Pharisees, in particular.

Introduction

The text of our lesson today has a direct connection with the parable contained in the first thirteen verses of the chapter from which it is taken. That parable has to do with an unrighteous steward, and, as we shall see later on in our study, it had a direct bearing on the Pharisees who were the constant critics of Jesus. From the opening words of the parable we learn that Jesus was speaking primarily to his disciples, but from verse 14 it is clear that the Pharisees regarded the Lord's words as having some reference to them, too. "And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him."

Two of the outstanding characteristics of the Pharisees were self-righteousness and covetousness. The first of these was severely condemned by the Lord in the series of parables in chapter 15; and now the second characteristic is just as soundly condemned in the two parables of chapter 16. Anyone who reads the two chapters together will have no trouble in seeing that there is a point of

contact between the parable of the unrighteous steward and that of the prodigal son. The prodigal was guilty of "wasting his substance," while the steward was charged with *wasting his lord's goods*.

It was evidently the purpose of Jesus to teach those who held to the idea of self-righteous respectability that there are other ways of misusing that which has been entrusted to them, than by riotous living. Thus, according to Jesus, when one appropriates to himself that which should be used in the Lord's service, he is in reality just as unfaithful to God as is the abandoned sinner who spends his substance in riotous living. This was the Lord's way of exposing the sin of covetousness; and when the Pharisees scoffed at him, he replied to them in the language of the text of our lesson at this time. The principal lesson of the parable of the unrighteous steward is plainly stated in verse 9, and the burden of the lesson now before us is the story of a man who did not use his money to help others until it was too late.

The Golden Text

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" The full statement of the context of this portion of our lesson is, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." Thus it is seen that Jesus, in discussing the question of trust in God *versus* mammon worship, stated the proposition both negatively and positively, and then gave the reason for the course he prescribed.

The Lord's teaching here in no way implies that he discouraged prudence in connection with material things, or that he suggested that his disciples should disregard secular duties. At no time did he put a premium upon either asceticism or carelessness regarding human obligations. The thing which Jesus is primarily emphasizing is that his disciples must always keep

first in their minds the things which are of supreme importance. He warns against the worthlessness of ideals which may be outgrown; and since his disciples are children of eternity, rather than time, it is the height of folly to devote the strength of life to the gathering of treasures which cannot be converted into the currency of the country to which they are going.

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 which is in it will be liable to the same fate. The Lord's warning therefore is not that a man may lose the *thing* for which he lives, but that he may actually lose *himself*. (Cf. Matt. 16: 26.) Every Christian should regard that which he possesses as being his only in trust, and should therefore use it in such a manner as to give glory to its true owner; or, as Jesus says, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (Cf. 1 Tim. 6: 17-19.)

The Text Explained

Stewardship—An Opportunity

(Luke 16: 19-21)

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

It has already been pointed out in this lesson that the text which we are to study today is the Lord's reply to the Pharisees for their criticism of his teaching in the parable of the unrighteous steward. The Pharisees were lovers of money, that is, they wanted it for themselves, rather than to use it in the service which God has ordained, namely, for those in need. So, when they scoffed at him, Jesus said unto them, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

The Lord explained the meaning of the parable of the unrighteous steward, and if we look at the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we can see the close connection between the two. For example, Jesus said in verse 9, "And I say unto you, Make to your-

selves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." The rich man of the parable now before us had the mammon of unrighteousness in abundance, but he failed to use it so as to make friends who could receive him into the eternal home of the soul.

Verse 10 says, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." In the parable now before us we have an example of a man who was unrighteous in that which was least, and who, as a result, was denied the enjoyment of that which is greatest. The next two verses say, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's who will give you that which is your own?" The rich man was not faithful in that which belongs to God, and was consequently denied that which

could have been his eternally. The 13th verse lays down the broad principle which covers the conduct involved in the lesson now before us.

The rich man of the parable is not named. The term which is usually applied to him, Dives, is the Latin for "rich man," and is not therefore a name in the commonly accepted meaning of the term. The idea was to show the character and conduct of the man, rather than to give his name. The purple dye, it is said, was obtained from a rare shell-fish, each one yielding about one drop; and this fact shows why only expensive garments were dyed purple. The purple was the outer garment, while linen was the inner. The mention of these garments and the continual feasting indicates a life of extreme luxury.

And a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The only possession which this man had was his name; and, incidentally, this is the only parable which Jesus spoke in which he gave the name of one of the characters. The whole story of the rich man and Lazarus is one of contrasts. It begins with the rich man's extreme wealth and the beggar's extreme poverty. It is worthy of note that the rich man is not charged with ill-gotten gain, nor does the beggar ask for more than that which "fell" from the banquet table. The point to remember is that the rich man did not *give* the poor man anything. Another point of contrast is suggested by the attention of the dogs: the poor man's only attention was given to him by the scavengers of the streets, while the rich man was surrounded by his family and attentive servants.

The Consequence of Social Injustice

(Luke 16: 22-26)

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Here are more contrasts. One is buried, but nothing is said about such service for the other. The destinies, however, of

both men are mentioned, and they provide the greatest contrast. The state of the righteous is represented as being in "Abraham's bosom" which, according to Vincent, was a Rabbinical phrase, equivalent to being with Abraham in Paradise. Vincent also quotes Goebel as saying that "to the Israelite Abraham seems the personal center and meeting-point of Paradise."

Hades, literally the unseen or invisible world, is, according to Thayer, the realm of the dead, or the common receptacle of disembodied spirits. The corresponding Old Testament word is *Sheol*. This may be seen by considering Peter's use of the quotation from Psalm 16: 8-10, as found in Acts 2: 25-31. Many Bible students hold that Hades is divided into two regions—one called Paradise, which is the abode of the righteous dead; the other called Tartarus, which is the abode of the wicked dead.

Some Bible readers, especially those who have only the King James Version, may experience some difficulty in understanding the true significance of the term "Hades," since it is translated "hell" in that version. There are three words, each with a distinct meaning, which are translated "hell" in the King James Version. They are *Gehenna*, *Hades*, and *Tartarus*. *Gehenna* always refers to the place of eternal punishment; *Hades*, to the intermediate state; and *Tartarus*, to that part of *Hades* where the wicked are kept during the intermediate state. The American Standard Version clearly shows the difference in the meaning of all these words. *Gehenna* is uniformly translated "hell"; *Hades* is always anglicized; and while *Tartarus* is translated "hell," the marginal reference shows that *Tartarus* is the term which is meant.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. Compare the small favor which the rich man requested with that which the poor man desired by way of food. The rich man had the mammon of unrighteousness in his possession, and he could have used it so as to make friends for such a time as this; but, alas! he abused his stewardship by wasting his substance

upon himself. The anguish which the rich man was suffering was the punishment he was suffering in the intermediate state. (Cf. 2 Pet. 2: 9.) Both Jesus and Peter teach that the punishment in *Tartarus* will be both severe and continuous throughout the period between death and the resurrection; but the Scriptures also teach that there is a difference in the mode and degree of the punishment of the intermediate and the eternal states.

The punishment in Hades or Tartarus is the punishment of the disembodied spirit, whereas the punishment of Gehenna is that of both the body and spirit. (Cf. Matt. 10: 28.) "As the body and soul are both to be destroyed in hell, hell (*Gehenna*) cannot belong to the intermediate state, but to that state which follows the reunion of body and soul at the resurrection. Hell, then, lies beyond the final judgment." (J. W. McGarvey.) The punishment of the intermediate state will end with the resurrection, but the punishment of Gehenna will last forever. (See Matt. 25: 46.)

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. This passage not only teaches that people will reap that which they sow (Gal. 6: 7, 8), but also that memory is a definite factor in future punishment.

And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us. It would be difficult, if not indeed impossible, to find language which shows in a clearer manner that with death the righteous and the wicked are forever separated. Two important lessons may be learned from this verse, namely, (1) the righteous are neither homeless nor unconscious during the period between death and the resurrection (cf. Phil. 1: 23), and (2) it refutes the doctrine of Universalism; for the gulf is fixed and cannot be crossed. The wicked are forever lost.

The Sufficiency of God's Word

(Luke 16: 27-31)

And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him

to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. McGarvey and Pendleton think that the double attempt of the rich man to use Lazarus as his servant shows how hard it was for him to adjust himself to his new condition. At any rate, his eyes were opened to the truth, and his natural sympathies were awakened for his brethren. No one who is lost wants anyone whom he loves to share his misery with him. Barnes thinks that it is remarkable that the rich man did not ask to go himself, but he evidently realized that that was impossible; for his condition was "fixed." The time for people to try to keep their friends and loved ones from going to the place of torment is while they are still here with them.

But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. This was equivalent to saying that they had the Old Testament scriptures to guide them. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 15-17.) It is possible that the rich man and his five brothers heard the Old Testament read in the synagogue every sabbath (cf. Acts 15: 21), but that had not produced faith in their hearts. That is God's way; and if it will not work, neither will man's way.

And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. No miracle will change the hearts of people who are set in their own ways, and who will not listen to that which God has spoken through his inspired word. It was not long after the Lord had spoken this parable before a *real* Lazarus did arise from the dead; but instead of causing the Jewish leaders to accept Jesus as the Christ, the miracle served to intensify their efforts to put him to death. (See John 11: 47-53.)

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead. It was Abraham in the parable who did the speaking, but it was Jesus who put the words into his mouth. So this is in reality the Lord's appraisal of the revealed will of God. It is designed for a purpose, namely, showing people how to go to God; and in this respect there is nothing which can take its place.

In emphasizing Moses and the prophets, Jesus incidentally indicated that the rich man suffered the penalties which they imposed. He had failed to keep the commandments. He had not loved his neighbor as himself. The Jews had Moses and the prophets; we have Christ and the apostles; and if we get the lesson which we should, we will hear those who have addressed their message to us. He who

has one opportunity and does not use it, need not ask for more. The rich man rejected the law which he had, and why should he ask for another? In speaking of people and their opportunities, Jesus says, "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matt. 13: 12.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What was the occasion for speaking the parable of the lesson today?
Briefly discuss the parable of Luke 16: 1-13 and give its general purpose.
To whom did Christ speak that parable?
Why did the Pharisees take exception to his teaching in it?
What were two of the outstanding characteristics of the Pharisees?
In what way had Jesus condemned these traits?
What was the Lord's purpose in the parable of our lesson today?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this text?
Does he mean that his followers should be indifferent to material goods? Give reasons for your answer.
What is his teaching regarding this subject, that is, of material wealth?
How should people always regard their material possessions?

Stewardship—an Opportunity

Give a brief recitation of the facts contained in the parable.
What four points did Jesus make in applying the lesson of the first parable?
Discuss the four points one by one.
Who are the friends who can receive us into the eternal tabernacles?
Why is one who is faithful in a little faithful also in much?
What broad principle did Jesus state at the close of the first parable?

What is the probable reason for not naming the rich man?
How was his extreme luxury emphasized?
Why name the poor man?
Point out some of the contrasts between the two men.
What was the exact sin of the rich man?

The Consequence of Social Injustice

What happened when the two men died?
What is the meaning of "Abraham's bosom"?
What and where is Hades?
Show the difference between Hades, Gehenna, and Tartarus.
Why did the rich man ask such a small favor from Abraham and Lazarus?
What was the "anguish in this flame"?
What is the difference in the punishment of the intermediate and eternal states?
Discuss fully.
What was Abraham's reply to the rich man's request? and what lessons does it teach?
What is the significance of the "fixed" gulf?
What are some of the lessons we learn from this?

The Sufficiency of God's Word

What was the rich man's next request? and why call on Lazarus again?
What was Abraham's reply?
What were "Moses and the prophets"?
Why was Abraham unwilling to send Lazarus back to the rich man's brothers?
Why wouldn't his brothers listen to one who had come from the dead?
Give the real significance of the remark about Moses and the prophets.
Show how this lesson is applied to us.
What did Jesus teach regarding our opportunities?

Lesson XI—June 12, 1960

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

Lesson Text

Luke 19: 1-10

1 And he entered and was passing through Jer'-i-cho.

2 And behold, a man called by name Zac-chae'-us; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Je'-sus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Je'-sus came to that place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zac-chae'-us, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zac-chae-us stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if

I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.

9 And Je-sus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

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

Devotional Reading.—Psalm 103: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

June 6. M.....	Greed and Its Punishment (2 Kings 5: 20-27)
June 7. T.....	Woes of the Oppressor (Heb. 2: 6-14)
June 8. W.....	John and the Publicans (Luke 3: 7-14)
June 9. T.....	Call of Matthew the Publican (Luke 5: 27-32)
June 10. F.....	Helping the Poor (Deut. 15: 7-11)
June 11. S.....	Mercy of Jehovah (Psalm 103: 1-10)
June 12. S.....	“By Their Fruits” (Matt. 7: 13-20)

Time.—A. D. 29.

Place.—Jericho.

Persons.—Jesus, Zacchaeus, and the multitude.

Introduction

The lesson which we are to study today contains one of the clearest examples of the manner in which Christ wins men to be found anywhere. It has been called a description of the love of God in action. If God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life, we may be sure that he does not want a single soul to be lost. This is exactly what the Bible says about the matter. “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.” (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4.)

But this represents only the divine side of the picture; man himself has a responsibility in the matter of his salvation. He must “come to the knowledge of the truth.” In speaking about the same question, Peter says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward,

not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3: 9.) To come to repentance means that the sinner recognizes his sin for what it is, and resolves to turn away from it. This, as we shall see later in this study, is what Zacchaeus did. No sin is too great for God to forgive, if the sinner will repent; but any sin will result in his condemnation, if he does not turn away from it. (Cf. Isa. 1: 18; Luke 13: 3.)

One of the greatest difficulties in saving and helping people is the inability to get close to them. We may have a message which we want to speak, and which will do them good because it comes from God; but the problem is how to gain their confidence and get them in the mood to listen. It is comparatively easy to befriend and serve the people who come to us; but how to reach the man who in his indifference stands aside is the question which should challenge our attention.

The Golden Text

This portion of our lesson is found in the body of the subject matter, and will be considered in due order.

The Text Explained

Zacchaeus the Publican

(Luke 19: 1-3)

And he entered and was passing through Jericho. Jesus was now on

his way to Jerusalem from Perea, where he had been for some time. He had probably crossed the Jordan at the ford “beyond Jericho,” and

since the road to Jerusalem passed through Jericho, he would travel through the city. Jericho was called "the city of palm-trees" (Deut. 34: 3), and was about seven miles west of the Jordan and some seventeen and a half miles slightly northeast of Jerusalem. See map. This passage through Jericho was about a week before the crucifixion.

And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich. It appears that the original publicans were men who contracted to gather taxes in the various Roman provinces, and to supervise subordinates who were entrusted with the responsibility of squeezing as much public revenue from the people as possible. These men kept a large part of the profit for themselves, and often formed stock companies through which they shared a part of it with prominent men in Rome.

The publicans of the New Testament were those Jews who hired themselves to the Romans, probably some knight or syndicate who had bought the right of taxation from the government, to collect the taxes. The Jews were a subjugated people in the time of Christ; and the fact that they were compelled to pay taxes to a foreign government made the taxes themselves odious. But when one of their own brethren became the agent for collecting the taxes, he lowered himself in their estimation to the point of complete ostracism; and was regarded in the double aspect of oppressor and traitor.

The odium which was thus attached to the office of publicans kept those who had any regard for the good opinion of their countrymen from accepting it, thus leaving the position in the hands of those who had neither self-respect nor good reputation. The publicans therefore generally deserved the contempt in which they were held. Publicans in other provinces of the empire were held in no better repute than in Judaea; for Cicero pronounces their business as "the basest of all means of livelihood."

McGarvey and Pendleton think that Zacchaeus may have been a subcontractor under some Roman knight who had bought the privilege of collecting taxes at Jericho, or perhaps the privilege of all Judaea. The prov-

inces of Peraea and Judaea were separated by the Jordan, and as Jericho was the chief city and nearest to the border of the two provinces, the taxes which were collected there must have been considerable. Zacchaeus evidently had not consented to become a social outcast for nothing; he had become wealthy as a result of his efforts. Being a chief publican, he no doubt profited from the labors of those who served under him, as well as from his own.

And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. The town of Jericho no doubt had been filled with reports concerning Jesus, and everybody there would naturally be anxious to see him as he passed through, including Zacchaeus. The crowd, however, surrounded Jesus before Zacchaeus got there; and, being a short man, he was unable to see over their heads. He, accordingly, had to make other arrangements.

Triumph over Hindrances

(Luke 19: 4-6)

And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. This tree was known as the Egyptian fig, and had leaves similar to a mulberry. It in no way resembled the sycamore tree which grows in this country. The low trunk and spreading branches of the tree of the text was both easy to climb and to remain aloft in while waiting for Jesus to pass by.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house. Jesus was often invited into the homes of others, but this was the only time he issued his own invitation to be the guest of another. The term "must" indicates that he was constrained to make this contact. His aim was to win Zacchaeus to a better life. This publican had evidently resigned himself to his position of a social and religious outcast, and was probably growing harder as the result of the attitude of his fellow Jews toward him; but Jesus knew that he had a soul to save. It is very likely that Zacchaeus inwardly still longed for friendship, in spite of his seeming indifference and he probably had

heard of the manner in which Jesus had treated publicans and sinners all of which made him determined to see him. At any rate, Jesus was successful in breaking the outer wall of indifference which surrounded Zacchaeus, and this was the first step in bringing about his conversion.

And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. This was more than Zacchaeus had expected, but he was equal to the occasion. Not only had he seen Jesus, but he is now to have the privilege of entertaining him in his home. This is an area of Christian activity which is often neglected. There are many people whose entire outlook on life and religion could and would be changed for the better, if those in the church would show them the kind of sympathetic understanding that Jesus extended to the publican of Jericho. Jesus never compromised with sin, but he made sinners realize that their souls were worth saving. Obligations involving this kind of work should not be neglected.

The Results Which Followed

(Luke 19: 7-10)

And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner. This was the very attitude on the part of the Jewish leaders which called forth the series of parables in Luke 15. Jesus did not deny that Zacchaeus was a sinner, but he did emphasize the fact that he had come to the earth for the purpose of saving sinners. When the angel announced to Joseph the fact that his betrothed wife would become the mother of a child, he said, "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; cf. 9: 9-13.)

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold. The probable reason for standing was to enable Zacchaeus to give emphasis and publicity to his pronouncement. It does not appear that he had been in the habit of giving that much to the poor, but that was what he proposed to do from this time onward. (Cf. Luke 16: 9; Matt. 6: 19-21.) His offer to make

restitution for any improper exaction he had made does not, in and of itself, argue that all of his wealth had been gained by dishonest means; for if that had been true, he could not have restored fourfold. (Cf. Lev. 6: 1-5; 2 Sam. 12: 1-6.)

After Jesus had broken down the outer wall of indifference which surrounded Zacchaeus and had entered into his house, the next step was to get inside the citadel of the publican's heart. He did this by making Zacchaeus realize that he belonged to another world; and the closer he came to Christ, the more his outlook was changed. His values were altered, and money became of secondary importance. He saw a way to put his wealth to the proper use, and came to realize that extortion was a sin against both God and man.

This new attitude on the part of Zacchaeus had an immediate effect on his will, and that was the third step in his conversion. He not only saw the new world into which Christ was leading him, but he resolved to live in it. This required that he settle down in it and make whatever changes in his life that were needed in order to make him worthy of his new relationship. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17.) The resolutions which Zacchaeus determined to put into practice showed that his changed attitude was genuine. (Cf. Luke 16: 9-12.)

Not every person today is in the same situation that characterized Zacchaeus, nor is everyone faced with the same problem; but whatever our sin may be, it must be met in the same spirit in which the Jericho publican met his. In order for one to be changed, the offender must first put wrong things right, that is, the things which *can* be put right; and then he must begin to live toward God and his fellow man as the Lord directs.

And Jesus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. The assurance of salvation was spoken directly to Zacchaeus, but it appears that the remark about his being a son of Abraham was intended primarily for the critical bystanders. Jesus himself had repeatedly said that he was not sent to the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and while it is true that the

leaders of his day had ostracized Zacchaeus, he was still in the sight of God a son of Abraham. Their action could not destroy that fact, nor make him unworthy of salvation. Jesus therefore was consistent with the requirements of his mission when he sought the salvation of an outcast publican. There are several things about this short narrative which should be emphasized; for they have a direct bearing on the work which we should be doing as followers of Jesus. We are like the servant of the lord who made the great supper, and who had to send his servant out into the highways and hedges in order to find enough to fill his house with guests. As noted in the introduction to this lesson, God wants all men to be saved, and the work of teaching them and inviting them to the gospel feast has been given into our hands. (Cf. 1 Tim. 3: 15.)

1. *What was it that saved Zacchaeus?* He saw that personal love was seeking him as an individual. Jesus sought him for what he was—a lost soul—and not because of his wealth or social standing. And Zacchaeus probably felt that he was now like a jewel or coin which had been found and put back into its rightful place; or like a lost sheep which had been restored to the fold. He was now in the world of Jesus, and that was where he belonged.

Zacchaeus also saw that love was suffering for him. He knew that Jesus was defying society in coming into his house, and that the Lord had to pass through the fire of men's disapproval in order to reach him. But there was no fear in Zacchaeus; for he was confident that he was going to be able to live in this new relationship; for he knew that this friend was with him. (Cf. Phil. 4: 13.)

2. *The power of kindness.* This was unquestionably the method used by Jesus in dealing with Zacchaeus. Suppose the Lord had paused under the tree in which the publican was waiting to see him, and had said to him, "You child of the devil! You who grind the face of the poor, turn widows and orphans out on the street, and unjustly exact from others that which you have no right to, how shall you escape the damnation of hell?" Jesus knew how to be severe and how to condemn, and in language far beyond that which has just been

suggested (cf. Matt. 23: 33); but he also knew how to be kind to those who were in need. Zacchaeus was a man who was capable of being saved, and if Jesus had denounced him as some are wont to do today, we probably never would have heard of the little man in Jericho.

Most people have doubtless heard of the fable of the contest between the wind and the sun, in an effort to see which one could make a man remove his coat. It was not the severity of the wind, but the warmth of the sun, which caused him to take off his coat. There are times when severe language should be used (cf. 2 Tim. 4: 1-4), but wisdom is required if it is to be effective.

Down in the human heart, crushed
by the tempter,

Feelings lie buried that grace can restore:

Touched by a loving hand, wakened
by kindness,

Chords that were broken will vibrate
once more.

3. *Zacchaeus and his opportunity.*

When the Lord asked him to make haste, and come down; for *to-day* I must abide at thy house, Zacchaeus acted promptly. Suppose that he had said, "There are too many looking on," or, "I will wait and get a little more information about him before I act," what would have been the result? Zacchaeus knew enough about him to accept his invitation to come down, and he received him joyfully. So far as we know, this was the publican's first and last opportunity to be with Jesus; for there is no indication that Jesus ever passed that way again.

One may have many opportunities to obey the gospel, and then again he may have only one; but when one opportunity has been turned down, the responsibility for his salvation from that time forward is largely his own. That is a fearful thought to contemplate. "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55: 6, 7.) "And working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain

(for he saith, At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold

now is the day of salvation)." (2 Cor. 6: 1, 2.) "To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 4: 7b.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the central idea in our lesson for this time?
What does the Bible say about God's attitude toward the lost?
What responsibility does man have toward his salvation?
What is one of the great difficulties in trying to reach the lost?

Zacchaeus the Publican

How did Jesus happen to be in Jericho at this time?
Give some pertinent facts regarding the place.
What is the meaning of the term "publican"?
Who were the publicans of the New Testament?
Why was their occupation so objectionable?
What was meant by the expression "chief publican"?
Why would Jericho be a desirable place for the kind of work Zacchaeus did?
What great temptation did publicans have?
What caused attention to be focused upon Zacchaeus at the time of this lesson?

Triumph over Hindrances

What did Zacchaeus do to overcome his handicap?
What kind of tree was the sycomore?
What was peculiar about the Lord's statement to him?
What was indicated by the term "must"?
What must have been Zacchaeus' general feeling at the time of this lesson?
Why, then, would he want to see Jesus?

How did he respond to the Lord's request?
What had Jesus succeeded in doing?
What lesson is there in this example for us?

Why did Jesus have so much influence with publicans and sinners?

The Results Which Followed

Why did the people complain when Jesus went to the home of Zacchaeus?
What had this attitude caused Jesus to do prior to this time?
What was his usual reply to such criticism?
How did Zacchaeus respond to the Lord's kind treatment of him?
What did his resolutions imply regarding his previous life?
Why would he give so much to the poor, and restore fourfold?
How did Jesus reach the heart of Zacchaeus?
Why is readjustment always necessary in living the new life?
What does repentance always imply?
What assurance did Jesus give to Zacchaeus? and why?
Why mention the fact that he was a son of Abraham?
Why is this lesson important to us?
What was it that saved Zacchaeus?
In what way did love suffer for him?
What confidence did Zacchaeus manifest?
What can you say of the power of kindness?
Why did Jesus treat him as he did?
Discuss the relative power of severity and kindness in dealing with evil?
How did Zacchaeus regard his opportunity?
What lesson is there in this for us?
What great responsibility does one assume when he neglects one opportunity for salvation?

Lesson XII—June 19, 1960

JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

Lesson Text

Luke 22: 13-23

13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16 For I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he received a cup, and

when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

18 For I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20 And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the

new covenant in my blood, *even* that which is poured out for you.

21 But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

22 For the Son of man indeed go-

eth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed!

23 And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*This do in remembrance of me.*” (Luke 22: 19.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Isa. 53: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

June 13. M.....	The First Passover. (Ex. 12: 21-28)
June 14. T.....	Preparing for the Passover (Luke 22: 7-13)
June 15. W.....	The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11: 23-29)
June 16. T.....	Cup of Blessing (1 Cor. 10: 14-22)
June 17. F.....	Respect for the Supper (1 Cor. 11: 27-34)
June 18. S.....	The Great Sacrifice (Isa. 53: 1-6)
June 19. S.....	Time of Observance (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; Acts 20: 1-7)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the apostles.

Introduction

Inasmuch as the Lord's supper was instituted at the last passover which was observed before the law which authorized it was nailed to the cross of Christ, it will probably help us in our study of the subject now before us to have our attention called to the principal events of the passover. The twelfth chapter of Exodus should be carefully read, therefore, before beginning this study; for there is where we learn about the passover. This was one of the most sacred feasts of the Israelites, and it was observed by the faithful among them with religious fervor.

Those who read the Bible are aware of the fact that the children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt for many generations, and that their servitude toward the last became almost unbearable. But God who had made his promises to their father Abraham did not forget them. When the time for their deliverance came, he sent Moses to be their leader; and on the eve of their departure the death angel passed over the country and slew the firstborn of every family in Egypt, along with the firstborn of their cattle, except where the blood of the passover lamb had been placed

on the posts and lintels of the doors which opened into their houses. The sprinkling of the blood was an act of faith, and it was done only by the Israelites.

This memorial feast which was ordained at that time was a constant reminder to those observing it that the firstborn of the children of Israel were spared when the angel of death passed over Egypt. “And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.” (Ex. 12: 24-27.) No faithful Jew ever forgot this, or failed to eat the passover supper at the appointed time, if it were at all possible for him to do so.

The Golden Text

This portion of our lesson, being a part of the regular lesson text, will be considered in its due order.

The Text Explained

The Last Passover

(Luke 22: 13-18)

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. This verse can be best understood in the light of the preceding paragraph: "And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be sacrificed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we make ready? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house whereinto he goeth. And ye shall say unto the master of the house, The Teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover."

The normal population of Jerusalem was some two hundred or two hundred and fifty thousand people; but when the Jews who were living elsewhere came to the city for the passover, the number was raised to something like three million souls. This situation required, of course, that every available room be placed in the category of guest-chambers. The one now in question was furnished, as perhaps most of them were, so that all the disciples had to do was to get the passover meal ready. The law required that the passover lamb be selected on the tenth day of the first month, and killed on the fourteenth day of that month. The feast was also called "unleavened bread," because only unleavened bread might be eaten by the people throughout the entire week, or period of the feast.

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Bible students have long wondered whether or not Jesus and the apostles ate the passover supper on the day authorized by the law of Moses, or the day before, so that Christ him-

self was slain on the day of the killing of the sacrificial lamb. While Bible students will probably never agree on the question, there are some indisputable facts which should be considered in connection with it. (1) Jesus and the apostles ate the passover supper on the night before his condemnation and crucifixion. See John 13: 1ff. (2) The Jews had not eaten the supper at that time, John 18: 28. (3) The day of the condemnation and crucifixion is called "the Preparation of the passover," John 19: 14, 31.

The expression "With desire I have desired" indicates the earnest longing which was in the Saviour's heart regarding this particular passover. As already pointed out, this was the last time this institution could be observed before the law was taken out of the way. The typical design of the passover was to set forth Christ, and when he died for the sins of the world he became to those who accept his offer of salvation their passover. (See 1 Cor. 5: 7.) The reference to the Lord's suffering in the passage now under consideration was to his death, that is, he longed to eat *this* passover with his disciples before the ordinance was fulfilled in him. This is one of the reasons why some Bible students think that Christ and the apostles ate this supper in advance of the regular time, so that his death would coincide with the slaying of the paschal lamb. Monser (*Types and Metaphors of the Bible*) says, "He was crucified that very day and time wherein the paschal lamb was slain."

When Jesus said, "I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God," he did not mean to say that he would not eat *that* passover supper; for that is what he said he desired to do, and what he did do. (Cf. Mark 14: 14, 17, 18.) But since that was the last passover which could be eaten before the type was fulfilled in the antitype, this would be his last time to eat under the old order.

And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. It appears that the passover consisted in eating, followed by drinking, after thanks had been of-

ferred; and as the Lord gave the fruit of the vine to his disciples he reiterated his purpose not to drink again until the ordinance was fulfilled in his approaching kingdom.

The Lord's Supper Instituted

(Luke 22: 19, 20)

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you. This marks the beginning of the greatest monumental institution the world has ever seen. The elements are simple, and may be had wherever man can live; but their significance staggers the imagination. If those who have the right to eat at the Lord's table (cf. Luke 22: 29, 30), would only stop to think of the circumstances surrounding the institution of this supper, and what must have been the Lord's feelings when he brought it into being, they would never miss sitting around this table when it is at all possible for them to be there.

The "bread" which Jesus took on this occasion was the unleavened bread of the passover feast, and it is certainly in order, if not absolutely essential, that unleavened bread be used on the Lord's table. In addition to the fact that Jesus used that kind of bread when he ordained the supper, unleavened bread is also emblematic of purity. "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8.)

The injunction "this do in remembrance of me" shows that this is a memorial service. The Lord did not ordain that a book be written or that a monument be erected to perpetuate his memory, but rather that a service be performed for that purpose. Nor did he say that the service is to be in memory of his death only, but "this do in remembrance of *me*." Someone has said that "to the ex-

traordinary degree the Lord's supper gathers up into itself the greatest truths of our religion and the deepest realities of our experience. Every aspect of Christ's work—as Saviour, as Propitiation, as Friend, as Lord and Master, as Intercessor, and as Judge—is concentrated in the commemoration that we make." The Bible emphasizes, over and over again, the place and power of memory; and in keeping with that idea, Jesus instituted a commemorative festival in order that his followers might always bear in mind that which he has done for their salvation. The Lord's supper therefore comes with its appeal to the memory, so that the facts it celebrates and the truths it proclaims may be forever riveted upon the souls of his followers.

The Roman Catholic Church claims this passage, and its parallels, as the basis" for its doctrine of "transubstantiation," that is, that the bread and fruit of the vine were actually and literally changed into the body and blood of Jesus; and that the same thing happens today when the priest "blesses" the elements of the supper. The disciples who were with Jesus knew that the bread was still bread, and that the blood of Jesus had not yet been shed when he made that statement; and intelligent people to-day also know that the bread and fruit of the vine which are used in the supper do not undergo any such change.

If the Catholics were correct in their claim for the doctrine of transubstantiation, then consistency would demand that they affirm that Christ became a literal vine when he said, "I am the true vine." (John 15: 1.) And the same principle would obtain in the following instances: "I am the way," (John 14: 6); "I am the door of the sheep," (John 10: 7); "These women are two covenants," (Gal. 4: 24); "This cup is the new covenant," (Luke 22: 20; etc., etc.) Not even the Catholics themselves would contend for a literal interpretation of the passages just mentioned. When Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world," the Jews made the same mistake in trying to take his words literally; and they "strove one with an-

other, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (See John 6: 51, 52.)

Nichol and Whiteside note that when Jesus said concerning the bread in his hand, "This is my body," had he disappeared and the bread remained, his disciples might have believed in transubstantiation, but this did not occur—his body remained at the table with no change in form, and in his hand he held the bread. When the disciples ate, they ate bread not flesh. Paul says, "As often as ye eat this bread," "Whosoever shall eat the bread," "So let him eat of the bread." It is, therefore, expressly stated that in the communion we eat bread, not flesh. And that the fruit of the vine was still the fruit of the vine when they drank it is clear from the Saviour's own words: "I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26: 29; Mark 14: 25.) (*Sound Doctrine*, Vol. 1, p. 156.)

The Announcement of a Betrayer

(Luke 22: 21-23)

But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed! Those who are familiar with the gospel narratives are aware of the fact that the trend of events in the closing days of Jesus' earthly ministry was already casting dark shadows over the small group of his disciples, but the announcement of their Lord at the supper table that one of their own number would betray him must have appalled them. It was nothing short of alarming to learn that their greatest danger was from within—that the hand of the betrayer was then on the table with the Master.

It was, of course, the divine knowledge of Christ which enabled him to detect the traitor. John, in recording earlier events in the life of Jesus, wrote, "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning [possibly the beginning of the defection of some of his followers] who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him. . . ."

Jesus answered them, Did not I

choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil? Now he spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve." (John 6: 64, 70, 71.)

This divine knowledge has been spoken of as the "sensitiveness of purity," and it should be clearly distinguished from suspicion. Someone has said that the worst of men are often the most suspicious, simply because suspicion is often but a reflection of a man's own defects upon others. Purity, on the other hand, is never suspicious in the bad sense, never untrusting where it may find some ground for reposing trust, never in search of faults. But it is very sensitive, and the finer its quality, the more sensitive it is. It is a great discoverer of disguises.

This should be a fine lesson for every one of us, and should encourage us to try to cultivate the sensitiveness which belongs to purity. Too many of us are inclined toward suspicion, if indeed we are not almost wholly given to it. Purity has power of apprehension and penetrative insight; it is quick to discover. Some of the advantages of this purity are:

(1) It is important for our own personal advancement in holiness; for the purer we are, the quicker will be our moral perceptions. We should always be able to see the hideousness which clothes itself in beauty; and to discern betrayal in the hand which proffers help. And, furthermore, we should be able to do this without losing faith in humanity and God; for just because one goes astray, it does not follow that all do.

(2) Purity gives us true sympathy. It is noteworthy that the very one who is our model of sensitiveness is also our model of sympathy. Jesus, who was the quickest to detect sin, was also the surest to supply the sympathy which was needed. It sometimes happened that he did not even join in the verbal condemnation of the sinner. (Cf. John 8: 1-11.)

And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. Here we see the third practical use of the purity about which we are speaking—its social advantage. Those who have an exceptional measure of this purity exercise a tremendous power over others. This is clearly seen in the influence of Je-

sus over his disciples. The sensitiveness of his purity became a light in which they searched themselves. These men loved Jesus, and would never think of betraying him; but they also evidently knew something of the workings of human nature.

There are always strange possibilities within our nature, and those humble disciples were willing to look through the inner recesses of their souls, in the light which Jesus furnished, and see where the sin was. (Cf. Psalm 139: 23, 24.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of our study for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Under what circumstances was the Lord's supper instituted?
What was the passover? and when was it instituted?
Under what conditions were the Israelites saved from the death angel?
What was the twofold purpose of the passover?
How was the feast regarded by the faithful Jews?

The Last Passover

Under what circumstances did Christ and the apostles eat the last passover?
Why would a guest-room be so easily available?
What preparation did the passover supper require?
By what other name was the feast sometimes called? Why?
What did Jesus say to the apostles when they sat down for the supper?
Why is it thought by some that they ate the Passover a day early?
What are some of the facts which seem to indicate that they did?
Did Christ himself eat the supper? Give reasons for your answer.
What, then, did he mean by saying that he would not eat it, etc?
What did he do before giving the cup to the disciples?

The Lord's Supper Instituted

How does this supper compare with all other memorial institutions? Give reasons for your answer.
How can such simple elements be so enduring?
Who has the right to eat the Lord's supper today?

Why do you think some are so careless about eating this memorial feast?

What kind of bread should be used on the Lord's table? Give reasons for your answer.

What does the injunction "this do in remembrance of me" indicate?

What should those who eat the supper remember about Jesus? Why?

Discuss the place and power of "memory" in the Lord's service.

What well known doctrine do the Catholics try to base on this passage?

Discuss the meaning of "transubstantiation."

How do the Catholics demonstrate their inconsistency regarding this doctrine?

Show from the facts in the case that the teaching is utterly false.

The Announcement of a Betrayer

In what way did Jesus make this announcement?

What must have been the effect of it on the disciples?

From what source was their greatest danger?

How did Jesus know what Judas would do?

What had he previously said regarding him?

From what "beginning" did Jesus know this?

Do you think that Christ would have selected a devil to be an apostle? Give reasons for your answer.

In what way has this divine knowledge of Jesus been described?

Discuss the difference between "sensitiveness of purity" and "suspicion."

What is the value of such a lesson to us?

What are some of the powers of purity?

What are some of the advantages of this trait?

What did the disciples do when they heard the Lord's announcement regarding the traitor?

What should be our constant prayer?

Lesson XIII—June 26, 1960

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

Lesson Text

Luke 24: 25-40, 50, 51

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

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

27 And beginning from Mo'ses and from all the prophets, he inter-

preted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

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

29 And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far

spent. And he went in to abide with them.

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

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

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

33 And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Si'-mon.

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

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

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

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

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

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

50 And he led them out until *they were* over against Beth'-a-ny: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.*” (Luke 24: 5, 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 15: 50-58.

Daily Bible Readings

- June 20. M..... The Shadow of the Cross (Matt. 16: 21-28)
- June 21. T..... The Crucifixion (John 19: 17-22)
- June 22. W..... Jesus Triumphs over Death (Luke 24: 1-12)
- June 23. T..... Christ Died for Us (Rom. 5: 1-11)
- June 24. F..... The Empty Tomb (Matt. 28: 1-10)
- June 25. S..... Ascension Scene (Acts 1: 6-11)
- June 26. S..... Our Immortality (1 Cor. 15: 50-57)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACES.—Emmaus, Jerusalem, and Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

The entire twenty-fourth chapter of Luke should be read before the study of this lesson is started. After the account of the resurrection, we come next to the experience of two disciples on the way to Emmaus, the afternoon of the resurrection day. The Lord appeared to them, but they did not recognize him. This appearance of Jesus after his resurrection has been described as the most arresting of all of his appearances; for it has brought light to many who were in darkness, and comfort to innumerable souls who were in trouble. One of the two who were going to Emmaus that day was Cleopas; the other one is not named, but Edersheim has suggested that because Luke's record of the gospel is characterized by vivid

personal recollections, the unnamed companion of Cleopas may have been Luke himself.

We can well imagine the joy which filled the hearts of these two astonished disciples, as Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. They immediately returned to the city, and reported to the eleven and those with them their experience; and while they were yet speaking, Jesus himself stood in their midst and spoke to them. The narrative which records these events is short, and it is referred to by only one other New Testament writer, namely, Mark (16: 12); but it would be difficult to find a more beautiful production, or one which so vividly portrays the feelings

of men who were laden with disappointment and dread.

Jesus remained on the earth after his resurrection forty days (Acts 1: 3), during which time he frequently met with his disciples and discussed with them the things concerning the kingdom of God. It was during this period that Jesus gave the great com-

mission to his disciples, as well as many proofs concerning his resurrection from the dead; and then, as the brief period drew to a close, he led the eleven apostles out to the "mount called Olivet," near the little town of Bethany and from there he ascended back to his Father in the glory world.

The Golden Text

"Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen."

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is one of the cardinal doctrines of the gospel. "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) The resurrection from the dead was also the crowning proof of the Divine Sonship of Jesus. (See Rom. 1: 4.)

The fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, which is devoted to the resurrection from the dead, has been referred to as the summary of the gospel. Something of the meaning and importance of the resurrection of Jesus is set forth in the second paragraph of that chapter. "Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of

God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable." (1 Cor. 15: 12-19.)

But the triumphant word of the apostle is, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep." (1 Cor. 15: 20.) It was an event which could not possibly have failed to occur. We are wont to say that the resurrection of Jesus was a miracle, that is, something contrary to that which might have been expected—"a great exception to the law of death." But that is not the way the Bible speaks of it. The Divine testimony is that "God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death: *because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*" (Acts 2: 24; cf. verse 27.) It was impossible for death to hold the "principle of life" which Jesus possessed; and it would be a violation of all law should the "Holy One" be given over to corruption. *Holiness* can never see corruption; and *life* can never be given over to death. It would have been a miracle, if Jesus had not been raised from the dead.

The Text Explained

Made Known in the Breaking of the Bread

(Luke 24: 25-31)

And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he inter-

preted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. The term "foolish" is used in the sense of being without understanding, or thoughtless (cf. Tit. 3: 3); while "slow of heart" means that they were too dull or sluggish to believe. These terms describe their mental, rather than their moral, condition. The two disciples failed to recognize Jesus because their minds were occupied with

themselves—with the bitterness of their disappointment and the feeling which comes from thwarted hopes. This preoccupation caused them scarcely to notice Jesus when he drew near and walked with them.

These disciples had also resisted both the teaching of the Old Testament and that of the Lord himself. He had told them over and over again, in unmistakable terms, about that which the future held for him, but it had made little impression on their minds. (Cf. Luke 18: 31-34.) and again, they had refused to regard the evidence which was beginning to accumulate to the effect that their hopes might yet be realized. (See Luke 24: 22-24.) This is a forceful illustration of the power of preconceived ideas. Many people with such thoughts in their minds are almost wholly unaffected by the plainest of evidence from the word of God. After the truth is pointed out to them, and they see the inspired testimony with their own eyes, they still cling to their original ideas! This is a pathetic situation; and it is the very thing which Jesus dealt with in the lesson now before us.

It was ordained by the Father that the Christ should enter into his glory through suffering. That was why Jesus was willing to suffer. The writer of Hebrews says, "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; cf. Phil. 2: 5-11.) The books of Moses foretold the facts concerning Christ largely in types and shadows, while the prophets spoke regarding him in the clearest predictions and descriptions. The term "interpreted" is used in the sense of explaining the meaning of Moses and the prophets in foretelling the things regarding Jesus the Christ. The original word for "interpret" is used six times in the New Testament: Luke 24: 27; Acts 9: 36; 1 Cor. 12: 30; 14: 5, 13, 27. The basic idea, as may be seen from these passages, is to cause one to understand the meaning of that which was said.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: arid he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying,

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

The conversation with this delightful stranger had been an inspiration to them, and they were reluctant to part with him. It is true, as already pointed out, that they did not recognize him, but he had told them about the things which they wanted to know. These disciples had lost their hope and their gladness, but it is worthy of note that they had lost none of their desire for the things of Christ. The whole of their conversation had been about him, and they must have manifested much earnestness as they exchanged their views and feeling regarding the amazing things which had just transpired.

Luke does not say that Jesus intended to go on past Emmaus, but that "he made as though he would go further." His purpose was evidently to give the disciples an opportunity to express themselves regarding him. Did they want to hear more about the things he had been telling them? What is their attitude now that they have had the words of Moses and the prophets explained to them? These words have also a moral suggestion for us. Jesus has always been willing to go further than the people allowed him to go. (Cf. Mark 6: 5, 6; John 16: 12; Heb. 5: 11f.)

And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

There was evidently something about the manner of the Lord at this time which was strangely familiar to these disciples; and while he was giving them bread to supply the needs of their bodies, he opened their eyes and revealed to them that it was he who had just been feeding their hungry hearts with the truth and consolation of the word of God. But no sooner did they recognize him than he vanished out of their sight, apparently in a supernatural manner.

Burning Hearts and Further Evidence of the Resurrection

(Luke 24: 32-40)

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

while he opened to us the scriptures?

These words tell something of the effect the Lord's teaching had on them as they heard him explain the predictions of Moses and the prophets. Alford thinks that they are a kind of self-reproach for not having recognized Jesus before they did. It is interesting to observe the manner by which Jesus gave their joy and peace back to them. He first allowed them to tell their own story which revealed the cause of their misery, and then showed them the supreme necessity for the death of the Christ, something which they had never understood before. They had looked upon his death as a hideous and irreparable calamity; but when the meaning of the scriptures began to dawn upon them their heart began to burn within them—light was beginning to break in upon their darkened soul.

And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread. The joy which filled their heart made them unafraid of a journey by night, notwithstanding the fact that they had just dissuaded their unknown companion from such a move, or at least they probably thought that they did. Their new information was too precious for them to keep from the other disciples, and especially the apostles. The manner in which the eleven are mentioned seems to indicate that the companion of Cleopas was not one of the apostles. Although the "eleven" are mentioned as being present, we know from John 20: 24 that Thomas was not with them at that time. We are not told who the others were who were present, but they must have been the Lord's disciples. All of those who were gathered together were convinced that the resurrection of Jesus was an accomplished fact, and not merely an hallucination of the women, as they had first thought (verses 23, 24).

And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they be-

held a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. This appearance seems to be identical with that of John 20: 19-23; and if so, Jesus entered the room where they were while the door was closed. That was the cause of their frightened condition and made them think that they beheld a spirit. They had not yet learned that the powers of a resurrected-body were different from those of flesh and blood. This means that such a body was not subject to material barriers. The disciples were testifying to the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and Jesus appeared in their midst apparently to confirm their belief in the resurrection.

The Glorious Ascension of the Risen Redeemer

(Luke 24: 50, 51)

And he led them out until they were over against Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. Luke gives a fuller account of the ascension in Acts 1: 9-11. "And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."

The place from which the Lord ascended was the mount of Olives, near Bethany, "which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off." (Acts 1: 12.) Luke notes that after Jesus left the apostles "they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, blessing God." (Luke 24: 52, 53.) The final scene of Jesus with his disciples was that of blessing them. When Jesus left his followers on earth, he was

not bereaving them; for he himself said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." (John 16: 7.) He was depriving them of a lesser good, so that he could bestow upon them one that was greater.

It is interesting to observe that Luke is the only gospel writer to give any details of the Lord's ascension. The only other writer to mention the fact is Mark. "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." (Mark 16: 19.) Matthew and John, both of them eye-witnesses to the event, make no reference to it at the close of their narratives. John, however, does allude to it in the closing verse of chapter 1, where he pictures Christ as the ladder reaching from earth to heaven.

But the Lord's earthly work had been finished, and now in the presence of his chosen ambassadors he goes back to him who had sent him to be the world's Redeemer, to take his seat at the right hand of the throne of God as Prophet, Priest, and King, where "he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." And in God's own good time, he "shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." Paul's closing words to Timothy give us some idea of the blessing which shall be the lot of those who are ready for him. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 7, 3.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What benefit did you receive from reading the entire twenty-fourth chapter of Luke?

Relate the principal facts which took place on the road to Emmaus.

How long did Jesus remain on the earth after his resurrection?

The Golden Text

What place does the resurrection of Christ have in the gospel message?

How did it prove him to be the Son of God?

In what way did Paul emphasize the importance of the resurrection?

Was the resurrection of Christ a miracle? Give reasons for your answer.

Made Known in the Breaking of the Bread

What did Jesus mean by the terms "foolish" and "slow of heart"?

Why had these disciples failed to recognize Jesus?

How is the power of preconceived ideas illustrated in their lives?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer death before entering into his glory?

In what way did Moses and the prophets speak of Christ?

In what way did Jesus interpret these things to the disciples?

Can we "interpret" the scriptures today? Give reasons for your answer.

What effect did the words of Jesus have on the two as they walked along?

What had they lost and what had they retained regarding him?

Why did Jesus make as if he would go further?

Why did the disciples want him to abide with them?

What moral suggestion is here for us?

How was the Lord made known to them in the breaking of the bread?

In what sense did he vanish out of their sight?

Burning Hearts and Further Evidence of the Resurrection

What did the disciples mean by saying that their heart burned within them?

In what way did Jesus give them joy and peace back to them?

How had they previously viewed the death of Jesus?

Why did they return immediately to Jerusalem?

Whom did they find gathered together there?

Were all the apostles present? Give reason for your answer.

What had convinced the apostles that Christ had arisen?

What happened as they were talking?

What was the Lord's probable reason for appearing?

Why were the disciples terrified and affrighted?

The Glorious Ascension of the Risen Redeemer

Recite the facts in Luke's fuller account of the ascension.

From what place did Jesus ascend?

What did the disciples do after Jesus left them?

Why did Jesus say that it was necessary for him to leave them?

How many of the gospel writers tell of the ascension.

What did Jesus do when he ascended?

What does the Bible say about his second coming?

What did Paul mean by loving his appearing?

32°

33°

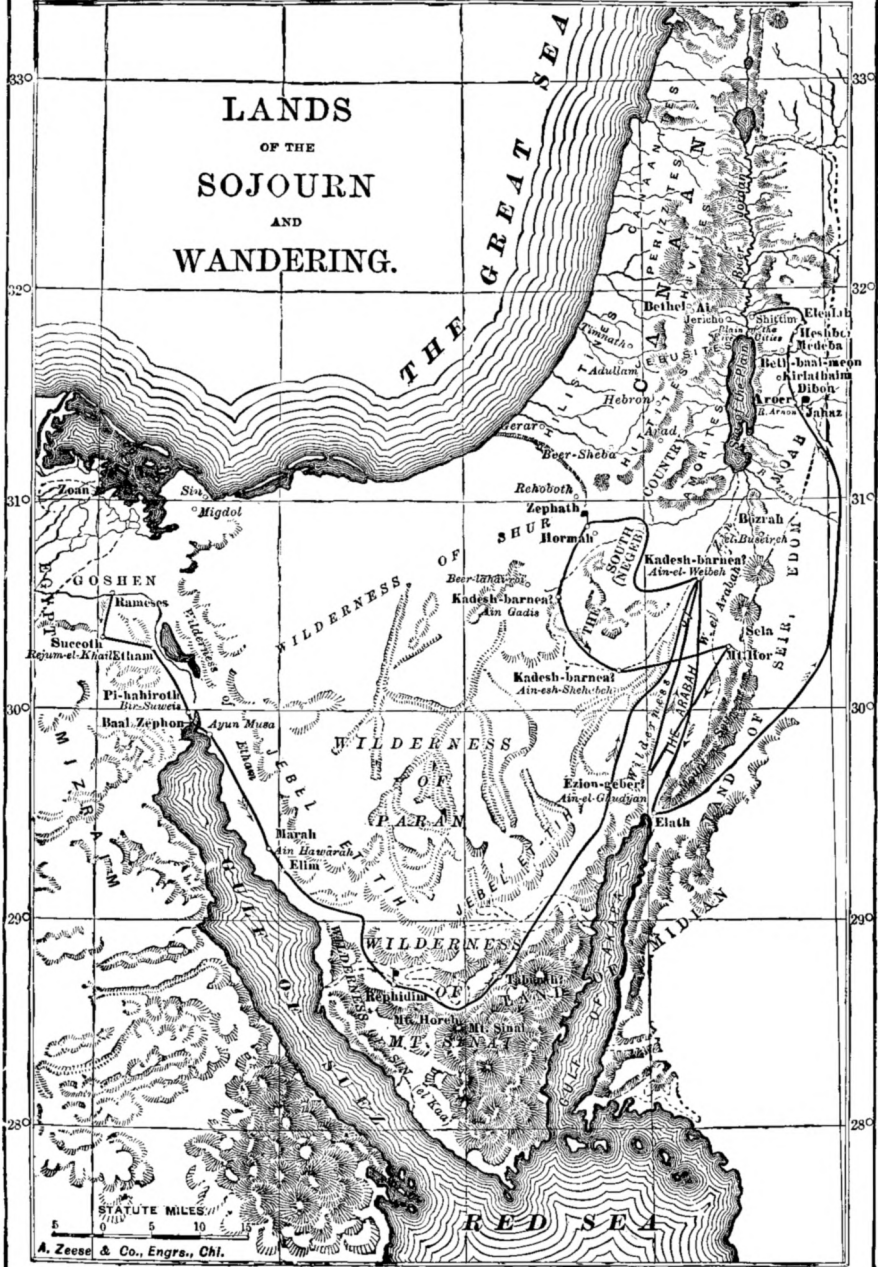
Longitude from 34° Greenwich

35°

36°

LANDS OF THE SOJOURN AND WANDERING.

THE GREAT SEA



STATUTE MILES
0 5 10

A. Zeese & Co., Engrs., CHI.

109°

116°

Longitude from 111° Washington

112°

113°

THIRD QUARTER

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY—MOSES TO JOSHUA

AIM.—*To learn interesting and important facts concerning the era of Moses and Joshua, and to observe the hand of God in the affairs of his people in that day.*

Lesson I—July 3, 1960

ISRAEL ENSLAVED IN EGYPT

Lesson Text

Ex. 1: 6-14; 2: 23-25

6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

7 And the children of Is'-ra-el were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose a new king over E'-gypt, who knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Is'-ra-el are more and mightier than we:

10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.

11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pha'-raoh store-cities, Pi'-thom and Ram'-ses.

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the

more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Is'-ra-el.

13 And the E'-gypt'tians made the children of Is'-ra-el to serve with rigor:

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

23 And it came to pass in the course of those many days that the king of E'-gypt died: and the children of Is'-ra-el sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with I'-saac, and with Jacob.

25 And God saw the children of Is'-ra-el, and God took knowledge of them.

Golden Text.—*"Jehovah will not cast off his people "* (Psalm 94: 14.)

Devotional Reading.—Psalm 94: 10-17.

Daily Bible Readings

June 27. M.	Israel Goes to Egypt (Gen. 46: 1-7)
June 28. T.	Sojourn in Egypt (Gen. 47: 1-12)
June 29. W.	Slavery in Egypt (Ex. 1: 8-14)
June 30. T.	A Cry of Distress (Psalm 94: 1-14)
July 1. F.	God Hears His People's Cry (Ex. 2: 23-25)
July 2. S.	Bondage of Sin (Rom. 6: 15-23)
July 3. S.	The Lord Delivers (Psalm 107: 1-9)

Time.—A.M. 2400-2473, or B.C. 1604-1531.

Place.—Egypt.

Persons.—God, the Israelites, and the Egyptians.

Introduction

It is generally understood by Bible students that Moses wrote the first five books of the Sacred Scriptures. Three of them, Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers, are largely historical. Leviticus is mainly devoted to the wor-

ship and ceremonies authorized by the law of Moses, while Deuteronomy is a kind of restatement of the law by Moses. The main part of the book contains three major addresses by the great lawgiver. Both Leviticus

and Deuteronomy contain some historical matter. Exodus is primarily the book of the law.

Whether we think of the five books of Moses as law or history, or both, it is not out of place to speak of Exodus as Volume II of the series. Genesis contains the history of God's dealings with the human race from Adam to Joseph as the ruler of Egypt, a period of 2369 years. The closing part of Genesis tells of the migration of the Israelites to Egypt, and as the record ends they are still there. Joseph, their illustrious son and brother was second only to Pharaoh in authority, but he died. The last verse says, "So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a

coffin in Egypt. According to the chronology used here, Joseph died in 2369 A.M. (*anno mundi*, in the year of the world), or 1635 B.C.

Practically the same information regarding the families of the children of Israel is given in the closing part of Genesis; but as Moses began the second volume of his history of God's people, he gave the essential facts again. He then went on to show how the people multiplied greatly, the effort on the part of the king of Egypt to curtail their growth, and the hardships to which they were subjected. This book is called EXODUS because it tells how the people left the land of the Pharaohs, and started on the wilderness journey to the land which God had promised to their fathers.

The Golden Text

"Jehovah will not cast off his people" God often casts his people down, but he will never cast them away, as long as there is any hope for their salvation. Jesus says, "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.) This passage has been called the Christian doctrine of election. Many people, however, have misunderstood and misused it. God nowhere teaches that he will save anyone irrespective of his will in the matter. God wants all men to be saved (cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9), and he has made possible the salvation of everyone (Heb. 2: 9); but the individual must accept God's offer. The Lord does guarantee that everyone who uses the divine means for his salvation shall be saved.

But discipline is always a vital part of the salvation of those who are accepted of God. This is the way the Bible speaks about the subject: "My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reproved of him; for whom the Lord

loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Heb. 12: 5b-8.) No person in the world is wise enough to meet the Lord's approval, without the Lord's correction. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

The history of the Israelites is one continuous story of the manner in which the Lord endeavors to save his people. They were continually having to be brought back to the way of righteousness, and that required righteous discipline on the part of the Lord. Punishment of his people is never pleasing to God, but it is frequently necessary for their good. Salvation involves so much—deliverance from sin, development of character, fitness to dwell with God; and the Lord has made it plain that he will never fail anyone who wants to be saved; he will never cast off his people.

The Text Explained

The Beginning: of a New Era

(Ex. 1: 6, 7)

And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. Not only had Joseph and his brethren all died, but also all of the Egyptians who knew the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. This, no doubt, accounted

in part at least for the changed attitude of the Egyptians toward the Israelites, as we shall see further on in this study. The passing of the generations of men and the progress of the world always results in new and different outlooks by those who come after them. William Cullen Bryant

notes that "the gay will laugh when thou art gone, the solemn brood of care plod on, and each one as before shall chase his favorite phantom."

And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Four different terms are used in this verse to indicate the rapid growth of God's people during the period following the death of Joseph. Historians and commentators tell us that it was not unusual in that country for the women to bear two or more children at a time. But we must not forget that Jehovah had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their descendants would be greatly multiplied. (See Gen. 22: 17; 26: 4; 28: 14; 46: 3.)

Jamieson observes that "there was no miracle—no direct interference with the ordinary laws that regulate the production of the human race. The mean rate of increase was precisely the same as that which is occurring in thousands of instances within our own experience. But, contrary to the usual course of things, the same high average of growth in population continued to be the normal standard in Israel for a series of many generations, fostered by the combined influences of a salubrious climate, a fertile soil, and a friendly government. Thus the promise was fulfilled, without miraculous interposition, by maintaining the established laws of Providence, with a special blessing to the posterity of the patriarchs." The result was that within the period of about two hundred and fifteen years the population of Israel had increased to more than six thousand men above twenty years of age, who were able to bear arms, besides the older men, women, and children. (See Ex. 12: 37, 38; Num. 1: 46; 2: 32, 33.) The over-all number of all the people was probably in the neighborhood of three million. This is in marked contrast with the first two hundred and fifteen years of their history, the first half of the four hundred and thirty-year period between the promise to Abraham and the exodus, when the total population was only seventy-five. (See Gen. 15: 13; Gal. 3: 17; Acts 7: 14.)

A Changed Attitude toward Israel

(Ex. 1: 8-14)

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. It is generally thought that Joseph served as governor of Egypt under one of the shepherd-kings, and it is very likely that the king "who knew not Joseph" belonged to another dynasty. This idea becomes more probable when we consider the fact that the term "knew" is apparently not used in the sense of not being acquainted with the history of Joseph, but rather as indicating that the new king did not recognize or approve the administration of the latter, and his refusal to acknowledge the obligations under which the entire land of Egypt was laid to this eminent prime minister of a king who had preceded him. Cf. Amos 3: 2; Matt. 7: 23, for the significance of the term "know."

And he said unto his people, Behold the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. Some commentators are of the opinion that the people of Egypt had suffered under the tyranny of the shepherd-kings; and since the Israelites were of the same occupation, this new king found it quite easy to attribute to them the same motives which characterized the preceding pharaohs. It is possible, of course, that this view is correct, but the context seems to suggest another idea. During the years of their great prosperity, the Israelites not only had spread out over the rich pasture-lands of Goshen with their immense flocks and herds, but multitudes of them had doubtless gone throughout the great cities as tradesmen; and all of them together by their energy, wealth, and extensive influence, were wielding tremendous power in the affairs of the country. And inasmuch as Goshen, the principal home of the Israelites, was in the direction of a number of warlike tribes, it was but natural for the new king to think of the subjected people in connection with the safety of the country itself. But whatever his motive may have been, the king thought it best to "deal wisely" with

the Israelites, that is, to take the necessary steps to limit their growth and power, and prevent their leaving the country.

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. The taskmasters were the men who appointed the work for the laborers to perform, and who saw that they performed it. The work itself was oppressive, and the manner in which it was exacted was even more so. Clarke, Jamieson, and other commentators think that in addition to the fact that the people were worked unmercifully, they were also required to pay an exorbitant tribute at the same time. This is implied from the term "burdens." They had to work as slaves and pay taxes too.

And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and, Raamses. These are cited as examples of the forced labor of the people. Josephus says that the Egyptians required the Israelites to "cut a great number of channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities and ramparts, that they might restrain the river, and hinder its waters from stagnating, upon its running over its own banks: they set them also to build pyramids." Clarke notes that if the history of the pyramids is not found in the Book of Exodus, it is nowhere else extant; and if their origin is not alluded to here, it is lost in antiquity. Jamieson says that all the public buildings in Egypt were built with slave labor, and that on some of the buildings were placed inscriptions to the effect that no free citizen was engaged in the servile employment.

But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. This is an example of the providence of God. Jehovah had told Abraham that his descendants would suffer, but he assured him that they would not be destroyed. Paul, in writing to Christians, says, "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.) The growth and prosperity of the Israelites sorely grieved the Egyptians.

And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor. This is a picture of the life these captives were required to live prior to their deliverance from Egypt. It was a life of the most painful servitude, oppressive enough in itself, but made much more so by the cruel manner in which they were treated while they were performing it. But a taskmaster never makes life easy for anyone. God had told Abraham about this hundreds of years before it happened. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great abundance." (Gen. 15: 13, 14.)

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, their history during the wilderness wandering, and their entrance into the land of Canaan is a type of the salvation wrought by Christ; and since Christianity, as revealed in the New Testament, is the very complement of its typology, we know that it must be the religion for this age which is pleasing to God. 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. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 1-13; Heb. 3: 16-4: 11.)

The Dawning of the Day of Israel's Deliverance

(Ex. 2: 23-25)

And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. When the record in Exodus is read along with Stephen's address in Acts 7, it will be seen that several years had elapsed since the cruel bondage of Israel had begun. Jamieson notes

that although a single king is spoken of as the oppressor of the Israelites, we are not hindered from considering the expression as denoting the powers which ruled Egypt at their period collectively. In other words, according to this commentator, the oppressors included Rameses, the one who began it, and his grand-son who followed the reign of the "daughter of Pharaoh," who found Moses, and her husband.

According to the authority we are now considering, the oppression of Rameses was somewhat mitigated during the mild and liberal reign of his daughter Thuoris, the royal patroness of Moses, and her husband Si-Ptha, *the king who* died, as mentioned in the verse now under consideration. But when Thuoris' nephew and successor Sethos, the grandson of Rameses, ascended the throne, the oppression was renewed in all its fury. He is described as "a grovelling, dissolute profligate, and at the same time a merciless tyrant, who, on finding in his new dominions the alien race of Israel, whom his grandfather had tried in vain to crush, increased in numbers, and swarming everywhere, resolved to revive the grinding policy of his great ancestor. The most grievous labors were imposed, and their servitude was harder than ever, their wages being principally paid by the *bastinado*," that is, the beating with

a stick, usually on the soles of the feet. It is easy to see, therefore, why they sighed by reason of the bondage, and we can well understand why they cried unto God. But if this terrible distress had not come upon them, they probably would have been reluctant to leave Egypt.

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them. It is worthy of note that the name of God is placed before four expressions of his benevolent attitude toward his afflicted people. (1) *God heard their groaning*, that is, he was not insensible to their great affliction. (2) *God remembered the covenant which he had made with their fathers*. It may appear sometime that he does not remember, but "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (See 2 Pet. 3: 8.) (3) *God saw the children of Israel*, that is, he took notice of their true condition. (4) *God took knowledge of them*, that is, he recognized them as the people to whom the promises which were made to the fathers belonged. This lesson should be of great encouragement to us; for God is the same yesterday, today, and for ever, when it comes to dealing with his children.

Questions for Discussion

From where are the lessons for this quarter taken?
 What is their general purpose?
 What is the subject of the lesson for today?
 Repeat the golden text.
 Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Discuss briefly the authorship and general character of the first five books of the Bible.
 Show how Exodus is related to Genesis.
 How did the writer begin the Book of Exodus?
 Why is it called "Exodus"?

The Golden Text

What is the general significance of the golden text?
 What is the difference between casting people *down* and casting them *away*?
 Briefly discuss the Christian doctrine of election.
 What is the meaning of "discipline"? and why is it necessary?
 How did the Israelites illustrate the matter of discipline?

The Beginning of a New Era

What usually marks the beginning of a new era?
 Why do so many people change their outlook on life?
 What was the condition of the Israelites at this time?
 What four terms are used to indicate their rapid growth?
 How is this great increase emphasized?
 How many Israelites went down into Egypt at first?
 How many left under the leadership of Moses?
 How long did they remain in Egypt?

A Changed Attitude toward Israel

What brought about this changed attitude?
 In what sense did the king not know Joseph?
 What motive prompted him in taking drastic measures against the people?
 What did he mean by "dealing wisely" with them?
 Who were the taskmasters?
 What did the people probably have to do in addition to their unmerciful labors?

What particular kind of work did they do?
 What was the purpose of these public buildings?
 What effect did their afflictions have on their growth in numbers?
 What does it mean to serve with "rigor"?
 What had Jehovah told Abraham regarding the matter?
 Show that the lot of the Israelites is a type of the salvation wrought through Christ.
 What is the purpose of the "typology" of the Bible?

The Dawning of the Day of Israel's Deliverance
 What is implied in verse 23 with reference to the time of their bondage?
 Who were the probable kings of the oppression?
 What indicated a renewal of the affliction of the people?
 What was the reaction of the people of Israel to this renewal of the oppression?
 What was the divine purpose of this terrible suffering?
 In what ways did God manifest his attitude toward them?

Lesson II—July 10, 1960

THE CALL OF MOSES

Lesson Text

Ex. 3: 10-15; 4: 10-12

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pha'raoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Is'-ra-el out of E'-gypt.

11 And Mó'-ses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pha'-raoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Is'-ra-el out of E'-gypt?

12 And he said. Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of E'-gypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13 And Mó'-ses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Is'-ra-el, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Mó'-ses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of

Is'-ra-el, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15 And God said moreover unto Mó'-ses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Is'-ra-el, Je-ho'-vah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of I'-saac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

10 And Mó'-ses said unto Je-ho'-vah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And Je-ho'-vah said unto him. Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Je-ho'-vah?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.

Golden Text.—*"Certainly I will be with thee"* (Ex. 3: 12.)

Devotional Reading.—Isa. 6: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 4. M..... Care and Education of Moses (Ex. 2: 1-10)
- July 5. T. Moses' Early Life (Acts 7: 21-28)
- July 6. W..... Moses and Israel (Heb. 11: 23-28)
- July 7. T..... Moses in Midian (Ex. 2: 15-22)
- July 8. F..... Training of Children (Deut. 6: 4-15)
- July 9. S..... Example of Home Training (2 Tim. 1: 3-15)
- July 10. S..... Objections Answered (Ex. 4: 1-9)

Time.—A.M. 2513 or B.C. 1491.

Place.—In the wilderness, near mount Horeb.

Persons.—Jehovah and Moses.

Introduction

The record of the life of Moses is divided into three equal periods of forty years each. The first was spent in Egypt, in the palace of Pharaoh:

the second, in the wilderness of Midian, with the family of Jethro; and the third, in the work of the Exodus, the encampment at Sinai, and the wanderings of the tribes in the wilderness. James Hastings says concerning him, "The general impression left on our minds by the life and character of Moses, regarded as a whole, is unquestionably one of extraordinary, almost solitary, grandeur, dignity, and elevation. Wordsworth's line describes it best:

Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.

"There is not a single character in the Old Testament that will bear comparison with it—for purity, for elevation, for power, for pathos. There is only one character in the whole range of history that overtops it; and *that is more than human*—the character of our Lord Jesus Christ." The ability of Moses, under God, to lead from two to three million slaves out of the land of Egypt, mold them into a great nation, and prepare them for entrance into a new land, is one of the greatest examples of leadership on record. And there is not a civilized nation on earth today which has not felt the impact of the moral and legal code which he was privileged to give the children of Israel.

Moses was preeminently a man of faith, as may be seen by reading the summary of his life in Heb. 11: 23-27: "By faith Moses, when he was

born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

The words just quoted reveal the secret of the great success which Moses was able to achieve; and no one can read them without realizing something of the goal which he was able to see in the distance. His sacrifices were great and his trials were many, but he counted them as nothing that he might see him who is invisible. (Cf. Phil. 3: 7-11.) When his face shone (Ex. 34: 29-35), it was not the result of his looking upon gold, silver, and the precious things of this life; but because he had looked up at God. As one stands by Moses in Egypt, he may think that his choice was foolish and absurd; but when he stands by the glorified Moses on the mount of transfiguration, he knows that the choice he made was the only wise one he could have made.

The Golden Text

This part of the lesson will be considered in the body of the text, since that is where it is found.

The Text Explained

God Commissions Moses to Deliver Israel

(Ex. 3: 10-12)

The first nine verses of Ex. 3 should be carefully read before beginning the actual study of the lesson now before us. Moses had been in the land of Midian for forty years, and it is assumed that he had been engaged in keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. This type of training had fitted Moses for the greater work of leading the people of God out of Egypt and across the great desert which lay between the place of their bondage and the land which Jehovah had promised to give the seed of Abraham.

The attention of Moses was arrested by the sight of a burning bush which was not consumed. When he turned aside to see it, he heard the voice of Jehovah speaking unto him. It was then that he had impressed upon his mind the deep sense of reverence for Jehovah; and it was under these conditions that he heard these words: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." Jehovah then told him that he had seen the affliction of his people in Egypt, and that he was going to deliver them.

The compassion of God for suffer-

ing humanity is a basic factor in every effort which is made to save them from their bondage, whatever the nature of the bondage may be. "I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; . . . And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them." If this was true regarding the physical suffering of people, what must be the attitude of God regarding those who are oppressed by sin! (Cf. John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8; Luke 15: 1-32.)

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. Anything pertaining to God's dealings with his people is of interest to Bible readers, but our greatest benefit from this study will be the typical import regarding the deliverance of people from sin through Christ. Moses was commissioned to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, while Jesus was commissioned to save his people from their sins. (Cf. Matt. 1: 21; Luke 19: 10.)

It should be kept in mind that Jehovah had just told Moses that "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians;" but now he tells him that he is to be the instrument of that mighty work. Moses was not sent merely as a prophet to preach deliverance to the people, but as an ambassador to entreat Pharaoh to let them go. God has always used the principle of mediation in seeking to bless his people. He speaks to men, and works for the best interests of all through the instrumentality of men. Chosen agents are called into the inner circle of Divine favor to learn the will of God and relay it back, along with his Divine character, to men. Judging from the attitude which Moses displayed before he left Egypt (2: 11, 12), it would be natural to assume that he would welcome the opportunity to be employed in the national emancipation of his people; but his forty years of meditation in Midian had deeply affected his thinking.

And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and

that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? When Moses volunteered his services as the patriotic defender of his people in Egypt at the age of forty, he acted, not from deep conviction and because he had been duly authorized by properly constituted authority, but rather from impetuosity of temper. And now, at the age of eighty, he feels himself wholly unfitted for the enormous task which the commission Jehovah was giving him involved, namely, that of an ambassador to Pharaoh and a leader of the hosts of Israel. (Cf. Judges 6: 11-16.)

There is a lesson here which most of us miss, especially as it is related to human nature. It frequently happens that a person may say or do something which he felt was right at the time and under the circumstances; but which he would be entirely opposed to saying or doing under the same circumstances later on in life. It is not right therefore to say that a person is always committed to that which he might have said or done when he was more or less immature. The application of this principle is in keeping with the spirit of the Golden Rule.

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. God never sends anyone on a mission which involves more than human wisdom and strength without providing divine help. (Cf. Josh. 1: 5, 6; Matt. 28: 19, 20.) No one, therefore, should ever be afraid to undertake any task which God has imposed upon his people. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4: 13.) "And as thy days, so shall thy strength be." (Deut. 33: 25b.)

The point regarding the "token" in the passage now before us is not clear. According to the arrangement of the verse, and particularly the punctuation, it appears that the fact that they would worship God in the mountain where Moses then was, that is, in Horeb or Sinai, would be the token. But it is difficult to see how that could be a token or sign to stimulate Moses to undertake the work of the exodus. *The Complete Bible—An American Translation* has

this rendering: "I will be with you," he said, "and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you. When you bring the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God at this mountain."

According to the rendering just quoted, it will be seen that something else was the token, namely, the sign of the burning bush which Moses had just witnessed. God further assured him that they would worship him at the mountain where they then were. This is also the view of Adam Clarke. "This miraculous manifestation of the *burning bush* shall be proof that I have sent thee; or, my being *with thee*, to encourage thy heart, strengthen thy hands, and enable thee to work miracles, shall be to thyself and others the evidence of thy divine mission." Dr. Clarke goes on to show that the statement regarding the serving of God in this mountain "was not the sign." But God simply showed him that in their return from Egypt they would pass that way and worship him there.

Moses Requests Further Instruction

(Ex. 3: 13-15)

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? Heathen people of that day, including the Egyptians, were wont to give appropriate names to the gods they worshipped; and it is only natural to suppose that the Israelites, during their long connection with the people of Egypt, had adopted some of their sentiments and customs. The name which was given to a god indicated something of its character or attributes, and it would therefore be natural for the people of Israel whose knowledge of the true God was evidently very crude to want to know something of the character of the deity who sent Moses. At least, Moses anticipated that such would be the case. It should be observed here that it is never out of place for anyone who is met by a claim that God is speaking to make careful inquiry as to the accuracy of the claim.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,

I AM hath sent me unto you. Bible students have never been able to agree on the true significance of these words, other than that they certainly point out the fact that God is self-existent and eternal. Matthew Henry notes that the name denotes that which he is in himself. He is not dependent on any other source for his being and power, which is in marked contrast with the best of men who must say, It is by the grace of God that I am what I am. And since Jehovah is the self-existent One, he is both self-sufficient and all-sufficient, and the Source of everything that is good in the entire universe. (Cf. 1 Tim. 6: 15, 16.) This certainly should have been good news to the enslaved people in the land of the pharaohs, just like it is to the people today who believe the message of his word to men.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. This further identification of Jehovah was intended for the information and encouragement of the children of Israel. He was the God of their fathers, and that would be sufficient evidence that he would be interested in the welfare of their children. Moses was instructed to proclaim this truth to the oppressed people. In speaking of the expression "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations," Adam Clarke notes that he had been known as Jehovah God, or Lord God as in the Authorized Version, from the creation of the world (cf. Gen. 2: 4), until the present. Even the heathen nations knew this name of the true God, as may be seen by considering such terms as Jove, Jao, and Jeve. The expression "for ever" refers to eternity, while "all generations" is probably limited to time as we know it.

Jehovah is the proper name of the God of the Bible; and it was the most holy, as well as the most significant, of all the names that designate Deity, so far as the Israelites were concerned. The term originally was made up entirely of consonants—IHVH, the tetragrammaton, that is,

the four consonants which formed the Hebrew "incommunicable name" of the Supreme Being. The true pronunciation was lost; and it was not until 1520, the time of the Reformation, that the modern pronunciation came into use.

Inasmuch as the Jews considered it unlawful even to pronounce the name Jehovah when reading the Hebrew Scriptures, the term *Adonai* was substituted for it, except when the name IHVH preceded or followed *Adonai* in the text, in which case the name *Elohim* was read in its stead. In the course of time the vowels of *Adonai* or *Elohim* were combined with the consonants IHVH to form *Yehovah*, or, according to a later system of transliteration, *Jehovah*. This form, with the anglicized pronunciation, entered into the English Bible, and has come into general use as one of the names—the proper name—of God.

The Reluctance of Moses Overruled by Jehovah (Ex. 4: 10-12)

And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. Moses' long residence in Midian and out of public life may have had an effect on his speaking ability; and it is possibly true that he was giving a true estimate of his qualifications for the task for which he had been chosen, that is, from his point of view. Stephen says that "he was mighty in his words and works," which apparently referred to the time he was in Pha-

raoh's court; but if the reference was to his work in the exodus, then the matter can be explained by the fact that Jehovah was with him.

And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah? All men, of whatever condition, owe their origin to God, and he is able to make any whom he chooses for any task effective in that work. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 26-31.) "And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:7-10.)

Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. This is the true meaning of a prophet—one who speaks for another; and it has always been true that when men are sent on a mission by divine authority, they are taught what to say, whether directly or through inspired revelation. (Cf. Matt. 10: 19, 20; 2 Tim. 4: 1, 2; 1 Pet. 4: 11a.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Discuss, briefly the three divisions of Moses' life.
What can you say of his greatness?
What was the great motivating principle of his life?
What were some of the things which his faith led him to do?
Show that in his case the end justified the means.
God Commissions Moses to Deliver Israel
What preparation did Moses have before God called him for this work?
In what way did Jehovah call him?
Discuss the compassion of Jehovah in dealing with his people.
What are some of the New Testament lessons in this connection?

What did God tell Moses he wanted him to do?
What is the practical benefit of this lesson to us?
Compare the commission of Moses with that of Jesus.
Upon what principle does God always work in delivering his people?
Why wasn't Moses anxious to accept this great opportunity?
Why the difference in his attitude from that of forty years earlier?
What important lesson should we learn here?
How did Jehovah answer Moses' objection?
What "token" did he give him? Give reasons for your answer.

Moses Requests Further Instructions

What further information did Moses request?
Why would the Israelites likely ask about Jehovah's name?

What should always be our attitude toward a message from God?
 What is the meaning of Jehovah's answer to Moses in this connection?
 What does this expression signify regarding God's nature and character?
 What effect should this news have on enslaved people?
 Why mention the God of their fathers?
 What is God's name for ever?
 What is implied by the terms "for ever" and "all generations"?
 What evidence is there that the heathen nations knew of God's name?
 What use in the Bible is made of the name "Jehovah"?
 Discuss briefly the history of the term through the ages. Consult a good English dictionary, and also a Bible dictionary.
 Show something of the attitude of the Jews toward the name "Jehovah."

How did we come to have the present form of the word?
 The Reluctance of Moses Overruled by Jehovah
 What objection did Moses offer for not wanting to accept God's commission?
 Do you think that he was really telling the truth about himself? Give reasons for your answer.
 What did Stephen say about his ability?
 Did this appraisal contradict Moses' estimate of himself? Give reasons for your answer.
 How did the Lord answer this objection?
 What did he mean by saying that he had made all conditions of men?
 How is God's power made perfect?
 What encouragement should this be to us?
 What does God always do for those who are authorized to work for him?
 Show that this is true of us.

Lesson III—July 17, 1960

THE PASSOVER

Lesson Text

Ex. 12: 21-30

21 Then Mó-ses called for all the elders of Is'-ra-el, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.

23 For Je-ho'-vah will pass through to smite the E-gyp'-tians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Je-ho'-vah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

25 And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Je-ho'-vah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Je-ho'-vah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Is'-ra-el in E'-gypt, when he smote the E-gyp'-tians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

28 And the children of Is'-ra-el went and did so; as Je-ho'-vah had commanded Mó-ses and Aar'-ón, so did they.

29 And it came to pass at midnight, that Je-ho'-vah smote all the first-born in the land of E'-gypt, from the first-born of Pha'-raoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.

30 And Pha'-raoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the E-gyp'-tians; and there was a great cry in E'-gypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession"* (Deut. 7: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 91: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 11. M.....First-born Threatened (Ex. 11: 4-10)
- July 12. T.....Passover Described (Ex. 12: 3-14)
- July 13. W.....Passover Observed (Ex. 12: 21-28)
- July 14. T.....Keeping the Passover (Num. 9: 1-8)

July 15. F.....	Passover a Memorial (Ex. 13: 3-10)
July 16. S.....	Christ Kept the Passover (Luke 22: 7-16)
July 17. S.....	Christ Our Passover (1 Cor. 5: 6-13)

Time.—A.M. 2513 or B.C. 1491.

Place.—The land of Egypt.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites; Pharaoh, and the Egyptians.

Introduction

The passover was one of the three great annual feasts which Jehovah authorized the Israelites to keep under the law of Moses. The other two were the feast of weeks (called Pentecost in the New Testament), and the feast of ingathering at the end of the year. The passover was the first of these feasts. "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep: seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib (for in it thou earnest out from Egypt); and none shall appear before me empty: and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sowest in the field: and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, when thou gatherest in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Jehovah." (Ex. 23: 14-17.)

It should be noted that these feasts are not always called by the same name. We learn from the 12th chapter of Exodus (and that entire chapter should be read before this lesson is studied), that unleavened bread only could be eaten by the Israelites with the Lord's approval during the seven days following the passover

feast; and it was for this reason that the entire period was referred to both as the feast of passover and the feast of unleavened bread. The second feast was called the feast of harvest (Ex. 23: 16), the feast of weeks (Ex. 34: 22), the day of first-fruits (Num. 28: 26), and Pentecost (Acts 2: 1). The third feast was called the feast of ingathering and the feast of tabernacles. (See Ex. 23: 16; Lev. 23: 34.)

On the eve of their departure from Egypt, Jehovah told the children of Israel that they would have a new beginning for their year. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." (Ex. 12: 1, 2.) The name of this month was *Abib* (Ex. 13: 4); and, according to the Rabbis, it began with the new moon of the later part of March or the first part of April, generally speaking. This month was also called Nisan, Neh. 2: 1; Esth. 3: 7. It was the beginning of the religious year, so far as the Israelites were concerned. Their civil year began in September-October, and was called Tishri. It was the seventh month of their religious year. (See Num. 29: 1.)

The Golden Text

"Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession." The full context of this statement is as follows: "For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he sware unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and re-

deemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. . . . *Thou shalt therefore keep the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them "* (Deut. 7: 6-11.)

This is precisely the idea which is expressed by the term "church" in the New Testament. The Israelites, in fact, are called the church in the wilderness. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us." (Acts 7: 38.) When Balaam under-

took to curse Israel for Balak he was compelled to bless them instead; and in his first prophecy regarding them, he said, "Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." (Num. 23: 9b.) This plainly shows God's intention regarding Israel "for his own possession."

When God selects a people for his own possession, we may be sure that he has a special work for them to do. He entrusted his word to Israel (Rom. 3: 1, 2); and in performing their work for him, one of their obligations was to keep alive the idea of

the true God, and thereby combat idolatry. And, too, they were to remain a separate people until Christ should come. People today are no less a peculiar people for God's own possession. "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: 14.) "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, *that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*" (1 Pet. 2: 9.)

The Text Explained

Instruction Regarding: the Passover

(Ex. 12: 21-23)

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover.

Anyone who stops to think about the occasion now before us must realize that much time and effort were required to get the word to the hosts of Israel, so that every family could make due preparation for the observance of the first passover. It is hardly possible that all could have been done in a single day, without Divine intervention; and there is no evidence that anything like that happened. But if the chapters between the last lesson and this one are read, one will have a better idea of the situation of the Israelites on the eve of the passover and the exodus.

Beginning with chapter 5, we have the account of the efforts of Moses and Aaron to get Pharaoh to permit the children of Israel to leave the land of Egypt, and go three days journey into the wilderness to worship Jehovah. Their pleas to the king were summarily rejected, and the burdens and misery of the people of Israel were greatly increased. Moses and Aaron were then given the power to perform miracles in the presence of the king; but since his magicians duplicated some of them with their enchantments, or secret arts, the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he refused to let the people go.

In addition to the miracle of turning the rod into a serpent, a series of Plagues was sent upon the land of

Egypt through the hand of Moses, the first three of which apparently fell upon both the Israelites and the Egyptians. But beginning with the fourth plague, that of the flies, there was a distinction made between the Israelites and the Egyptians, and only the latter suffered from them. "And I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am Jehovah in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: by to-morrow shall this sign be." (Read Ex. 8: 20-23.)

While there is no definite proof to substantiate the claim, it has been estimated that the period of time during which the ten plagues took place was approximately one month. There is, of course, sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that several days did elapse; and since the Israelites were not affected by the last seven of the plagues, it is reasonable to suppose that preparation was being made among them for the final days in Egypt. The further fact that the passover lamb had to be selected on the tenth day of the month, whereas, the passover itself was on the fourteenth day, is enough evidence to show that some advance notice of the feast was given to the people.

It should be observed that definite instruction was given to the elders by Moses. The expression "Draw out, and take you lambs" is apparently used in the sense of "go, and select suitable lambs." See marginal reading and compare Job 41: 1, where the

same original word for "draw" is used. "Canst thou draw out leviathan with a fishhook?" According to the families means according to the needs of the families. (See Ex. 12: 3, 4.) In telling them to "kill the pass-over," we have the lamb used for the institution. The kind of lamb to be selected is set forth in verse 5.

And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. This is the first mention in the Bible of the plant "hyssop" which was to play such a prominent role; but as well known as the word itself is, Bible students are not agreed as to its exact identity. It probably was some kind of a bushy plant which could be used to sprinkle the blood on the parts surrounding the door, that is, the two side-posts and the horizontal part above. The use of the blood around their doors was designed as a symbol for their protection; and they were assured that they would be safe from the destroying angel, if they remained within the blood-stained house. This became a type of the blood of Christ which saves those to whom it is applied from sin and destruction. Christ is our passover. (See 1 Cor. 5: 7.)

For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. The picture here portrayed is one which can be understood by any responsible person but the practical benefit to us is not so much as to what took place then, but in its typical import. We do not depend upon the blood of the paschal lamb on our doors, but on the blood of the Lamb of God which was shed for the remission of sins. No sinner can be saved from sin, except as he is washed and cleansed in the blood of the Lord Jesus; and that is done only as he comes to the laws and institutions which the Lord has appointed for applying the blood. (Cf.

1 John 1: 5-7; Rom. 6: 3, 4; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29.)

A Perpetual Obligation

(Ex. 12: 24-28)

And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. Thus the passover observance was, by the commandment of the Lord, made a matter of perpetual obligation on the part of the children of Israel. The expression "for ever" was used in the sense of "age-lasting" As long as the law of Moses continued, the people who lived under it would be required to observe the passover. "For ever" must always be understood as being coextensive with the age to which it is applied.

And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. The instruction which is given here was intended to guide the people when they reached the land which had been promised to them for a home; and it was given, as we can plainly see, before the first passover was observed. This was a part of the preparation which was necessary before the people could do that which was expected of them. The record of the instruction would serve as a guide to all successive observances of the feast.

There is in this vivid Old Testament account a sorry commentary on human frailty—our proneness to forget that which we ought to remember. But there was also something about it which would stimulate the curiosity of their children—something which would always make it necessary to teach those who needed to know the lessons which the institution had for God's people. God has always encouraged the use of reminders, both for those who probably would forget and for those who needed to know that for which the memorial stood. These are powerful motives for keeping any institution which God has ordained.

And the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah

had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. As Taylor notes, these commands were reverently received and implicitly obeyed by the people of God of that day. None of them said that they had escaped several of the plagues which had been sent upon the Egyptians without the observance of the passover, and why should they be required to do anything like that now? And neither did anyone object to the ordinance on the ground that the blood around the door would have no effect in keeping death from the family. These people had seen and heard enough since Moses and Aaron had been among them to convince them of the faithfulness of God in doing exactly that which he had promised. And so, when Moses spoke God's will unto them, they "bowed the head and worshipped"; and they also "went and did" that which Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron. All of this was but an expression of their confidence in Jehovah; and it is not out of place to say of the people, as Paul said of Moses, "By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them." (Heb. 11: 28.) Their faith was likewise manifested by their deeds.

The First-born of Egypt Slain

(Ex. 12: 29, 30)

And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. Verse 42 calls this a night to be much observed unto Jehovah by the children of Israel, and it was also a night to be much remembered by the Egyptians. Judging from the calendar date, the full moon was probably shining over the entire land, which would greatly aid the midnight march of he captives who had served the Egyptians for some two centuries. The selection of such a date for the passover and the exodus was doubtless deliberately chosen by the Lord himself. One can well imagine the great activity on the part

of the Israelites as they made their final preparation for the passover and their departure from the land of the Pharaohs; but it was all behind closed doors; for no one dared leave his house because of the strict command of Jehovah.

But as one looks at the dwelling-places of the Egyptians, he is impressed with a strange silence, as the calm before the storm; for at midnight the death angel struck, and there was not a home in which death had not entered. Adam Clarke notes that the term "first-born" is probably used in the sense of the chief, most excellent, best beloved, or most distinguished; but that could hardly be true unless the heads of the houses were excepted; for Pharaoh would certainly be the most distinguished in his house. But whatever the meaning of the first-born, whether literally so, or the one just described, death struck a mighty blow and left universal mourning in its wake.

And Pharaoh rose up in the night, lie, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. In the words of Jamieson, it is easier to imagine than describe the confusion and terror of the people who, suddenly aroused from sleep and enveloped in darkness, heard the groans of the dying and the wild shrieks of the mourners in every direction; and no one could go to his neighbor's aid. The hope of every family was destroyed at a single stroke.

This judgment, terrible as it was, was in strict keeping with Divine retribution. The Egyptians had caused the male children of the Israelites to be cast into the river, and now all their own first-born fell under the stroke of the destroying angel. But the punishment of the Egyptians was made to emphasize God's regard for the first-born of his own people; and throughout the remainder of the Bible that relationship has a prominent place among his own children. Truly Jehovah made a difference between the first-born of Egypt and that of the Hebrews.

Questions

for Discussion

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

Introduction
What was the passover?
What other annual feasts were the Jews

required to keep?
 By what other names were they called?
 What change was made in the Jewish year at the time of this lesson?
 By what other name was the first month called? and when?
 When did their civil year begin?

The Golden Text

Discuss the full setting of the golden text.
 What was God's purpose in choosing the Israelites for his own possession?
 Compare this concept with the basic meaning of the word "church."
 What does God expect of his chosen people today?

Instruction Regarding the Passover

What must have preceded the instruction in verse 21?
 Briefly review the record between the last lesson and this one.
 What distinction was made with reference to the ten plagues?
 When was the passover selected? and when was it killed?
 On what basis was the lamb taken?
 What was to be done with the blood of the sacrifice?
 Why was the institution called the "passover"?
 What is the benefit of this lesson to us?
 How is the blood of Christ related to God's people today?
 How is that blood applied to us?

A Perpetual Obligation

How long were the people required to keep the passover?

In what sense is the expression "for ever" used in the Bible?
 What two motives are assigned for keeping memorial institutions?
 Show why both are needed.
 In what way is this principle applicable to us?
 What are some of the institutions we observe by divine authority?
 In what spirit did the people of Israel receive this instruction?
 What did this indicate on their part?
 How did they manifest their faith?

The First-Born of Egypt Slain

How does the Bible speak of the night of the passover?
 What was the probable reason for selecting that particular date?
 Briefly describe the activities in the houses of the Israelites.
 Did you read the entire record of the institution of the passover?
 Who were the "first-born" of the Egyptians?
 How extensive was the destruction among them?
 Why were all the first-born killed?
 What did Pharaoh and his people do when the death-angel came upon them?
 What impression was made upon them?
 Show how this retribution was in keeping with Divine justice.
 What lesson do we learn regarding the first-born?
 In what sense are Christians the first-born today?
 What are some of the promises made to them?

Lesson IV—July 24, 1960

GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE

Lesson Text

Ex. 14: 10-16, 21, 22

10 And when Pha'-raoh drew nigh, the children of Is'-ra-el lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the E-gyp'-tians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Is'-ra-el cried out unto Je-ho'-vah.

11 And they said unto Mó'-ses, Because there were no graves in E'-gypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of E'-gypt?

12 Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in E'-gypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the E-gyp'-tians? For it were better for us to serve the E-gyp'-tians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

13 And Mó'-ses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Je-ho'-vah, which he will work for you to-day: for the E-gyp'-tians whom ye have seen to-

day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

14 Je-ho'-vah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mó'-ses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Is'-ra-el, that they go forward.

16 And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Is'-ra-el shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground.

21 And Mó'-ses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Je-ho'-vah caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Is'-ra-el went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Jehovah will guide thee continually.*” (Isa. 58: 11.)
 DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Psalm 37: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 18. M.....Jehovah’s Direction (Ex. 13: 17-22)
- July 19. T.....Israel’s Fear and Moses’ Faith (Ex. 14: 10-14)
- July 20. W.....Deliverance at the Sea (Ex. 14: 15-22)
- July 21. T.....Destruction of the Egyptians (Ex. 14: 23-31)
- July 22. F.....A Song of Deliverance (Ex. 15: 1-10)
- July 23. S.....A Song of Triumph (Ex. 15: 11-21)
- July 24. S.....Security through Faith (Psalm 37: 1-7)

TIME.—A.M. 2513 or B.C. 1491.

PLACE.—The Red Sea.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites; Pharaoh and the Egyptian army.

Introduction

The dramatic account of the departure of Israel from Egypt is found in the twelfth chapter of Exodus. “And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon: and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We are all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians.

“And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. And a mixed multitude went also with

them and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. . . . And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto Jehovah for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of Jehovah, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations.” (Ex. 12: 29-42.)

It should always be kept in mind that the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage was a type of the deliverance of people in this age from the bondage of sin, through Christ. Moses explained to the people something of the significance of the events in connection with their deliverance in the first part of Ex. 13; and then in the closing part of the chapter we are informed as to the route they took, and why. “And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 13: 17, 18.) We are also told that they took with them the bones of Joseph, as he commanded them (Cf. Heb. 11: 22); and that Jehovah led them by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.

The Golden Text

“*Jehovah will guide thee continually.*” This has always been true of

God in relation to his people. Man, left to himself, does not know the

way he should take; and inasmuch as Jehovah wants all men to travel in paths of righteousness, he never fails to supply the guidance which they need. "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10: 23.) "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14: 12.) This is the reason why man must have someone to lead him.

No better illustration of the truth of the golden text can be found than the history of Israel on their way to Canaan. Jehovah always kept his promise to them, but they frequently refused to follow his leadership. Had they been willing to go as he directed, the journey from Egypt to Canaan would have been about two years, and they would all have reached the land of promise; but as it was, the journey took forty years, and only two of the six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men who were able to bear arms (Num. 1: 45, 46), reached the place toward

which they started. (See Deut. 1: 19-40; 2: 14.)

The apostle Paul makes frequent use of the experiences of Israel to impress upon us the need for following the Lord's leading explicitly. (See 1 Cor. 10: 1-11.) Christ has promised to be with us all the way (Matt. 28: 20); but are we willing to follow him? "For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

"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. 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." (Heb. 3: 16-4: 2.)

The Text Explained

A Crucial Hour for Israel

(Ex. 14: 10-12)

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah. This test of Israel's faith in the leadership which had been provided for them was purposely planned by Jehovah. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea. And Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he shall follow after them; and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah. And they did so." (Ex. 14: 1-4.) Study the map carefully at this point.

Although there were more than six hundred thousand men of the Israel-

ites who "were able to go forth to war," they were not sufficiently armed to meet the great army of Egypt; and it is easy to imagine, from the human viewpoint, something of how they felt when they learned that the host of their former rulers was approaching their camp. It appears that as soon as Pharaoh had time to recover from the great shock of the destruction wrought by the destroying angel, he realized what they had done in letting the Israelites leave their borders and he immediately ordered his army to follow them, and bring them back to Egypt. Read Ex. 14: 5-9.

The entire lives of the people of Israel had been spent in servitude, and they no doubt had lost all the courage they ever possessed. This was a terrible moment for them. The chariots and horsemen were getting closer and closer to them, and they were without a d e q u a t e military weapons; the sea lay before them, and they had no way to cross it. This was, indeed, a great test of their faith. It is true that the Israelites greatly outnumbered the Egyptian armed

host; but they were no match for them in military power. The only thing they could do was to cry unto God; but the subsequent record shows that they did not do so because of a deep trust in him.

And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. Jamieson notes that the great consternation of the Israelites is somewhat astonishing, considering their vast superiority in numbers; but their deep dismay and absolute despair at the sight of the approaching army receives a satisfactory explanation from the fact that the civilized state of Egyptian society required the absence of all arms, except when they were on service. If the Israelites were entirely unarmed at their departure from Egypt, they could not think of making any resistance and with this hopeless attitude, they began to talk about their graves, but they were wishing that they were in Egypt, rather than in the great wilderness.

It would be difficult to find a greater example of complete distrust in God; but before we criticize them too much, we should ask ourselves the question, Are we doing any better? They were fresh from a life of bondage, with little experience in serving Jehovah; while we have the light of the full revelation of God to encourage us. They had certainly seen enough of the power of Jehovah during their last few weeks in the land of their bondage to make them believers; but it apparently did not take long for them to forget that.

Their desire to be left alone, so that they might serve the Egyptians is typical of human nature. Anyone who is acquainted with the facts in the case knows that the Lord's way is always the best; but how many people prefer to be left alone, so that they may follow after the ways of the world! Such people, as Matthew Henry observes, show a sordid contempt in their attitude toward liberty. They profess to prefer servitude, be-

cause true liberty is attended by some difficulties; but anyone who will stop to think knows that there is no comparison between the two ways of life. "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4: 17, 18.)

The Lord's Way of Escape

(Ex. 14: 13-16)

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. Moses was severely tried on this occasion, as the people spoke against him; but it is encouraging to note that his composure was unruffled, and his meekness unaffected. His magnanimous attitude presents one of the sublimest examples of moral courage to be found anywhere; and it is a notable fact that he maintained that attitude toward the rebellious Israelites throughout his relationship with them. Even when Jehovah threatened their destruction, Moses prayed that they might be spared, although God had said that he would make a great nation out of him. (See Ex. 32: 7-14; Deut. 9: 6ff.)

It is quite evident from the text now before us that Moses firmly believed that Jehovah would lead the people out of their difficult situation; for he had, in effect, been told that (cf. verses 1-4; Rom. 10: 17); but it is also true that he did not know how the matter would be resolved. His advice to the people therefore was not to fear, but to wait for the Lord to act. He knew that Jehovah was stronger than Pharaoh and his army, and he was confident that utter destruction awaited the Egyptians.

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. The record does not say that Moses prayed unto Jehovah, but it is implied from this statement. God always wants his people to pray, but

prayer alone is not enough; there must also be action. It is always right to pray; but when God grants the petition, it is time then to act. As already noted, God had promised to save the people, and it was not necessary to continue to cry unto him for that deliverance. It was their time to move.

This is one of the reasons why it is not in order for people out of Christ to pray for God to save them. All the necessary provisions for salvation have already been made; and anyone who desires that blessing needs only to obey the gospel. It is true that Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius prayed before they were Christians, and their prayers were heard; but they were not praying for God to do for them that which they knew to do. They needed light, and as soon as it came they promptly obeyed.

The people of Israel were told to go *forward*. They could not at that time see how they could do that, for the sea was before them; but when God gives a seemingly impossible command, the way to complete obedience will always be made. Jehovah wants his people to believe in him, and he therefore never makes it impossible for them to do that which he says. "Forward" has always been the watchword for people who are pleasing to God. We can profitably look back on the past, only if we seek lessons for the future—lessons which will bring to our hearts greater hope, power, zeal, and devotion to God's will. No one should ever be afraid to go forward at the command of God.

"And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: 'Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown!' And he replied: 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'"

And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. This was the Lord's way of providing safety for his people. He could have done this without the instrumentality of Moses and his rod; but since Jehovah uses people in carrying out his plans for saving those who obey him, it was necessary that Moses appear in the capacity of the

instrument of God in saving Israel. They would be made to see that he was God's servant and their chosen leader. This is an important lesson for us all to learn. (Cf. Ex. 14: 31.)

The Plan Perfected

(Ex. 14: 21, 22)

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. Various efforts have been made to explain the whole phenomenon on the basis of an ebb-tide made lower than usual, and held longer than usual, by a strong east wind. But anyone who looks at the record, even casually, must see in it the miraculous; for we are plainly told that Jehovah told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea; and that "Jehovah caused the sea to go back." The strong east wind was but an instrument in his hand. Taylor notes that it is quite immaterial, so far as the miracle is concerned, whether the divine power was put forth directly upon the sea, or indirectly through the force of the wind upon it; for the coming of the wind at once, in connection with the symbolical act of Moses, is as much a miracle as the immediate division of the waters, without the intervention of any secondary cause, would have been.

And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. This actual occurrence in the experience of Israel had a typical import in the New Testament plan of salvation. "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. 10: 1, 2.) These people sustained the same relationship to Moses, as the Lord's people today do to Christ. Both groups are called the church (Acts 7: 38 Matt. 16: 18); and a specific law was given to govern each—the Old Testament for the people under Moses, and the New Testament for the people under Christ. In each instance, baptism was the final act which stood between the people and salvation. Cf. Ex. 14: 30 (Psalm 105: 23ff); Mark 16: 15, 16.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Give a summary of the account of the departure of Israel from Egypt.
Trace their journey from Egypt to the Red Sea.
What made the night of their departure so memorable?
Discuss the typical import of the lesson now before us.
Why did they take the bones of Joseph with them?
How were the people guided in their journey?

The Golden Text

Why does the Lord always guide his people?
Show how this was particularly true of Israel.
Why did it take them so long to reach the land of Canaan?
What use did Paul make of their failure to heed the divine guidance?
Why is faith so important in living the Christian life?

A Crucial Hour for Israel

How did Jehovah test Israel's faith in his leadership?
Describe the camping place of the people near the Red Sea.
Why did Pharaoh follow after them, after giving them permission to leave?
Why were the Israelites, in such great numbers, so afraid of the army of Egypt?
What effect did the state of bondage have on the people of Israel?
Why did they cry unto Jehovah?
Did they really trust him? Give reasons for your answer.

What did they say to Moses? and why?
What did they say regarding their graves?
What lesson should we learn from their great distrust in Jehovah?
Why did they want to be left alone in their slave state?
Show that the same spirit still characterizes many today.
What is the Christian way to regard affliction?

The Lord's Way of Escape

What did Moses say to the people regarding their frightened condition?
In what way was Moses tried by their attitude?
How did he manifest his moral courage?
Show that this was his true attitude through all of his experiences with them.
What was Moses' personal attitude toward the plight in which they were?
What did Jehovah say to him regarding his crying unto him? and why?
What lesson should we learn from this regarding our prayers?
Is it right for people to pray for salvation? Give reasons for your answer.
What was the significance in the command to go forward?
Show that this always involves trust in God.
What was Moses next told to do? and why?

The Plan Perfected

How do you know that the Lord performed a miracle in opening the sea?
What part did the east wind have in it?
What is the typical import of their passage through the sea on dry land?
In what sense were they baptized?
What was the purpose of this baptism?

Lesson V — July 31, 1960

GOD FEEDS HIS PEOPLE

Lesson Text

Ex. 16: 11-20, 35

11 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mó'-ses, saying,

12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Is'-ra-el: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Je-ho'-vah your God.

13 And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground.

15 And when the children of Is'-ra-el saw it, they said one to another,

What is it? for they knew not what it was. And Mó'-ses said unto them, It is the bread which Je-ho'-vah hath given you to eat.

16 This is the thing which Je-ho'-vah hath commanded. Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an ó'-mer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent.

17 And the children of is'-ra-el did so, and gathered some more, some less.

18 And when they measured it with an ó'-mer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they

gathered every man according to his eating.

19 And Mó'ses said unto them, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Mó'ses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became foul: and

Mó'ses was wroth with them.

35 And the children of Is'ra-el did eat the man'-na forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat the man'-na, until they came unto the borders of the land of Ca'-naan.

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

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—John 6: 33-40.

Daily Bible Readings

July 25. M.....	Promise of Manna (Ex. 16: 1-10)
July 26. T.....	Manna Given (Ex. 16: 11-18)
July 27. W.....	Manna and the Sabbath (Ex. 16: 21-30)
July 28. T.....	Manna a Memorial (Ex. 16: 31-36)
July 29. F.....	Water Provided (Ex. 17: 1-tf)
July 30. S.....	Spiritual Food for Us (1 Cor. 10: 1-7)
July 31. S.....	The Living Bread from Heaven (John 6: 48-59)

TIME.—A.M. 2513 or B.C. 1491.

PLACE.—The wilderness of Sin.

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

Introduction

The student should keep in mind at all times the aim of the series of lessons now before us, as stated in the beginning of the quarter, namely, To learn interesting and important facts concerning the era of Moses and Joshua, and to observe the hand of God in the affairs of his people in that day. This lesson sets forth one of the many examples of the Lords care for his people. The sun may shine, or the shadows may grow deep; but whatever the circumstances may be, God is always there to bless his people. This is a lesson of trust, and it is emphasized throughout the Bible.

The principal benefit of a lesson like this to us is found in the example which it furnishes. Paul says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4.) If God met the needs of his people in the days of this lesson, we may be sure that he will not fail his people now. But there is another important lesson to remember in this connection: God wanted his people to learn that there are more things involved than simply supplying their food and clothing. "And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilder-

ness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or not. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live." (Deut. 8: 2, 3; cf. Matt. 4: 4.)

When God leads his people into any situation, or commands them to do something which may turn them away from the material things of life, he wants them to know that he will take care of them, if they will do his will. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 31-33.) A failure to trust in God in this respect springs from exactly the same sinful attitude which characterizes the avaricious man in his quest for riches; both manifest a lack of trust in God.

The Golden Text

"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life" This statement is taken from a discourse which Jesus delivered on the "Bread of Life." (See John 6.) After he fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, the people, in their great excitement wanted to take him by force and make him king. But he withdrew from the crowds and spent the night in the mountain alone. The disciples, in the meantime, were having trouble in getting across the sea of Galilee, by reason of a great wind that blew. Jesus came to their rescue near morning, and they were soon at the place where they were going.

The next day the multitudes began to search for Jesus, and when they found him on the other side of the lake, that is, on the other side from the place where he had fed them, they said unto him, "Rabbi, when earnest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I *say* unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the

loaves, and were filled." (John 6: 25b, 26.) His sermon regarding the "Bread of Life" then followed, which should be read in full. The Lord's aim in this message to the people was to emphasize the spiritual over the material.

Physical food is essential to the welfare of the fleshly body, and so is Jesus to the spiritual. In saying that he is the bread of life, Jesus means to say that he meets the needs of the spiritual man in all of its details. (See John 6: 30-36.) But many of his disciples found it difficult to accept his teaching regarding the eating and drinking of his flesh and blood (see verse 60), because they tried to understand it literally. Jesus explained to them that they had missed the point in his teaching. "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." (Verse 63.) This is to say that his words must have a spiritual application. "It is the spirit that giveth life." (Cf. James 2: 26.)

The Text Explained

The People Murmur and Food Is Provided

(Ex. 16: 11-15)

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God. The children of Israel were characterized by murmurings throughout their wilderness wanderings. They began on the camp site near the Red Sea, and they never ceased thereafter. It would be an interesting study to read of all their experiences, and observe the various things about which they complained. They were not satisfied with the provisions which were made for their safety. They didn't like the leadership which had been provided for them. They were dissatisfied with their food. In the verses which precede our lesson, Moses told the people that their murmurings were not against him, but against Jehovah. That is always true when complaint is made regarding that which the Lord has ordained.

But God is always gracious, and does not deal with his people according to their deserts in all instances. This is especially true when they need to be taught the lessons of life. The people of Israel had been accustomed to home life in Egypt, where they could obtain their food in a normal manner; but now they must learn to depend upon Jehovah for such things. Moses, as already noted, said that God suffered them to hunger, and fed them; so that it could be demonstrated what their attitude toward him was. But, as in all cases, God never suffers his people to be tempted beyond their ability to bear: he always makes the way of escape for them.

The people were to be told that they would have flesh in the evening, and bread in the morning, that is, their needs would be met in the wilderness, just as they had been supplied in Egypt. And in addition to having their needs supplied, they would know that Jehovah their God was able to take care of them. This was a part of the training which they needed and received at the beginning of their journey toward Canaan.

And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. We learn from Psalm 78 something of the attitude of the people toward God, when they desired food, and also how God felt toward them. "And they tempted God in their heart By asking food according to their desire. Yea, they spake against God; They said, Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? . . . Therefore Jehovah heard, and was wroth; And a fire was kindled against Jacob, And anger also went up against Israel; because they believed not in God, And trusted not in his salvation. Yet he commanded the skies above, And opened the doors of heaven; And he rained down manna upon them to eat, And gave them food from heaven. Man did eat the bread of the mighty: He sent them food to the full. He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens; And by his power he guided the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as the dust, And winged birds as the sand of the seas: And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, Round about their habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled; And he gave them their own desire." (Verses 18-29.) This plainly shows, as do other references, that their food was miraculously given to them. (Cf. John 6: 31; Neh. 9: 15.)

And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? for they not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat. "And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." (Ex. 16: 31.) "And the manna was like coriander seed, and the appearance thereof as the appearance of bdellium." (Num. 11: 7.) Coriander was an annual plant which bore small spicy seeds used as seasoning and medicine, while bdellium probably refers to the color. Bible students are not agreed as to what bdellium was, whether a precious stone or a gum. (See Gen. 2: 12.)

Directions for Gathering the Manna

(Ex. 16: 16-20)

This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded. Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. And when they measured with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. An omer was approximately from one half gallon to three quarts, and that was the amount each person was to have for his daily ration. We are not told just how it came to pass that every man had just the right amount when it was measured; but from Paul's use of the incident in 2 Cor. 8: 15, it is possible that those who may have gathered a surplus gave it to those who were unable to gather as much as they needed. The gathering had to be done at the proper time; for "when the sun waxed hot, it melted." (See verse 21.)

The gift of the manna taught the lesson of dependence—it taught the Israelites that their heavenly Father cared for them; and the requirement regarding taking too much taught them to have a feeling for their neighbors. This message was to be spoken to them every day throughout their wilderness journey by the voice of the manna. Someone has said that there is always enough for gratitude, but never enough for greed. A daily supply for daily needs. Tomorrow must wait till it comes. This is the lesson that Jesus taught when he instructed his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt. 6: 11.)

And Moses said unto them, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became fold: and Moses was wroth with them. This further emphasized the fact that they were to depend upon God for their daily needs. The idea is not that they were to be indifferent toward such things; but rather that they must follow the Lord's leading. God ordained, following man's fall, that he

must eat his bread in the sweat of his face (Gen. 3: 19); but that does not mean that man can meet his own daily needs without the help of God. James declares that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1: 17.)

The conduct of the people in trying to keep some of the manna until the morning was a manifestation of their distrust in God, and probably grew out of a sinful curiosity and covetousness which led them to make trial of the Lord. But they soon learned that God cannot be mocked; for, as Adam Clarke notes, they had a mass of the most loathesome putrefaction for their pains. The thoughtful student of the Bible frequently sees that God makes disobedience and sin irksome to the transgressor; and this is probably done because God in his mercy wants man to see that it is better to serve him, than it is to follow after the evil one.

God wants his people to have what they need, but he does not want them to learn to trust their own wisdom and material possessions instead of him. The divine philosophy for trustful living is set forth by Jesus in some of the most beautiful and attractive languages ever spoken. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubic unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is

cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 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: 24-34.)

No one can please God who will not trust his promises. Our lesson text today makes it very plain that God promised to supply the daily needs of his people, and told them not to try to trust in one day's surplus for the next day's needs; but notwithstanding the plainness of the instruction, they did not hearken unto Moses who was speaking for God. But before we criticize them too severely, let us examine ourselves and see if we are doing any better. God knows our needs, and has specifically promised to supply them. "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "These things are food, drink, and clothing." We are then cautioned, just as the Israelites were, not to be anxious for the morrow: "for the morrow will be anxious for itself."

The Length of Time Manna Was Furnished

(Ex. 16: 35)

And the children of Israel did eat the manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat the manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Another statement in Josh. 5: 10-12 gives some further information regarding the time when the manna ceased. "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal; and they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat the produce of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched grain, in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the produce of the land: neither had the

children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Forty years was a long time for the people to be fed miraculously; but the storehouse of God's blessings was no less abundant: as with the Israelites, so with us, "And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 19.) Adam Clarke has suggested that this daily supply of the manna probably gave rise to the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Because it is said in the verse now under consideration that the children of Israel ate manna until they came to a land inhabited, some have sup-

posed that the Book of Exodus was not written until after the manna had ceased, and that Moses therefore could not have written it. The following statement by Adam Clarke may throw some light on the question: "But these words might have been added by Ezra, who under the direction of the Divine Spirit collected and digested the different inspired books, adding such *supplementary, explanatory, and connecting* sentences, as were deemed proper to complete and arrange the whole of the sacred canon. For previously to his time, according to the universal testimony of the Jews, all the books of the Old Testament were found in an unconnected and dispersed state."

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

In what way does this lesson emphasize the aim of the series of the quarter?
What is the principal benefit of the lesson to us?
What was Jehovah endeavoring to teach his people by giving them food?
In what way did he expect them to manifest their attitude toward him?
When people do God's will, what may they always expect from him?
In what ways do people manifest a lack of trusting in God?

The Golden Text

Discuss the setting of the golden text.
Why did Jesus deliver a discourse on the "Bread of Life"?
In what sense is Jesus the bread of life?
Why did many of his disciples reject his teaching in this sermon?
What reason did Jesus give for their misunderstanding?

The People Murmur and Food Is Provided

Why did the children of Israel murmur so much?
Name some of the things about which they complained.
What did Moses tell them regarding their murmuring?
Discuss the gracious attitude of Jehovah toward his people.
What type of food did Moses say that God would send them?
Why is it necessary to stress over and over God's care for his people?
Discuss the psalmist's remarks about the manner in which they were fed.

What shows that the people were miraculously fed? Discuss fully.
In what way did the manna come? and how did the people react to it?
Why did they call it "manna"? Describe its appearance.

Directions for Gathering the Manna

What were they told to do about gathering the manna?
How much was each person entitled to daily?
How did it happen that they all had the same amount when they measured it?
What two principal lessons did the gift of the manna teach the people?
Why were they forbidden to leave any of the manna till morning?
Why did some of the people disobey this command?
What happened to the manna they tried to keep till morning?
What valuable lesson do we learn from this?
How did Jehovah show his mercy toward the people in this respect?
Discuss at length Jesus' philosophy for trustful living.
Why can't a man serve two masters?
Why can't people please God without trusting in his promises?
How can we apply this lesson to ourselves?

The Length of Time Manna Was Furnished

How long did the children of Israel eat manna?
Under what circumstances did it cease to be provided for them?
If Moses wrote Exodus, how did the statement about the manna's ceasing become a part of the record?

Be trustful, be steadfast, whatever betide thee,
Only one thing do thou ask of the Lord,—
Grace to go forward wherever he guide thee,
Simply believing the truth of his word.

—Anon.

Lesson VI—August 7, 1960

ISRAEL AT SINAI

Lesson Text

Ex. 20: 1-17

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am Je-ho'-vah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of E'-gypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Je-ho'-vah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me,

6 And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Je-ho'-vah thy God in vain; for Je-ho'-vah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;

10 But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Je-ho'-vah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days Je-ho'-vah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Je-ho'-vah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which Je-ho'-vah thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Golden Text.—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22: 37, 39.)

Daily Bible Readings

- August 1. M..... Israel before Jehovah (Ex. 19: 9-16)
- August 2. T..... Israel in the Presence of Jehovah (Ex. 19: 17-25)
- August 3. W..... Duties to God (Ex. 20: 1-11)
- August 4. T..... Duties to Man (Ex. 20: 12-20)
- August 5. F..... Summary of the Commandments (Deut. 5: 6-15)
- August 6. S..... Law Exalted (Psalm 119: 1-8)
- August 7. S..... Perfect Law (Psalm 19: 7-14)

Devotional Heading.—Psalm 19: 7-14.

Time.—A.M. 2513 or B.C. 1491.

Place.—Mount Sinai.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

Introduction

In their march from Egypt through the wilderness, the most awe-inspiring experience the children of Israel had was at Sinai. The record says, "In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the

land of Egypt, the same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel en-

camped before the mount. And Moses went unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." (Ex. 19: 1-6.)

This may be very properly described as the setting for making Israel into a nation, separate and apart from all other peoples. They had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and now they are to become the first theocracy the world had ever seen. The greater part of Ex. 19 tells of the preparation which had to be made before the people could meet Jehovah and hear his voice. "And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in

the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And Jehovah came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount and Moses went up." (Ex. 19: 16-20).

The majestic voice of Jehovah, in the midst of the terrifying sights and sounds caused the people to fear greatly; and they besought Moses that he, and not Jehovah, would speak unto them. Read Ex. 20: 18-21. The same reverence which was enjoined then forbids any vain attempt on the part of men to describe the scene, more than is related in the simple but sublime words of Moses, and recounted in the noblest strains of Old Testament poetry. It was in the midst of these awe-inspiring scenes that the greatest event of Old Testament history took place, namely, the voice of God himself speaking the law by which his people were to live.

The Golden Text

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself " These words were spoken by Jesus in response to a question by a lawyer of the Pharisees. The Pharisees, Herodians, and the Sadducees had been trying to ensnare Jesus in his talk, but their every effort had met with signal defeat. This lawyer came forward to make another try, but his effort was no better than the others. After Jesus had answered his question, he himself asked the Pharisees a question, which they could not answer; and from that day forward no man asked him any more questions.

The Lord's reply to the lawyer's question about which commandment is the great commandment in the law may be described as the sum total of man's moral and spiritual obligation.

Loving God with one's whole heart, soul, and mind is equivalent to loving him with one's whole being. (Cf. 2 Kings 23: 25.) Or, to state the matter in other words, we have in the Lord's reply an enumeration of the different elements which are necessary to the complete harmonious self-dedication of the entire inner man to God, as its highest good. Men have religious inclinations deeply planted in their nature; and when once they are enlightened, conscience will not allow them to give their supreme affection to any being in the universe but God.

The New Testament teaches that one's neighbor is one who stands in need of his help. He may be a friend, an enemy, an acquaintance, or a stranger. (See Luke 10: 25-37.) And when one loves his neighbor as himself, he will do the best he can for

him. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.

... Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law." (Rom. 13: 8, 10.)

The Text Explained

The Source of the Ten Commandments

(Ex. 20: 1, 2)

And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Although the Bible teaches that the law was ordained by or through angels, and spoken by them (see Acts 7: 53; Gal. 3: 19; Heb. 2: 2), the passage now before us seems to indicate that it was God speaking. This view is also confirmed in Deut. 4: 12, 13, 32, 33. "And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.

. . . For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?"

But whether it was indeed and in truth the actual voice of God who spoke the law, or whether he spoke through angels, the lesson is the same; the law was the law of God to the Israelites, and it had to be obeyed on penalty of death. The writer of Hebrews says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2: 1-3a.) The salvation spoken through angels was the law of Moses, and those to whom it was addressed were held accountable for every transgression and disobedience.

The words of verse 2 have been called the Law-Maker's preface. It

is in this statement that he asserts his own authority to enact the law for his people. He makes it plain to them that he is the sole object of their religious worship for three reasons. (1) He is the self-existent One; (2) he is *their* God; and (3) he brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. He had redeemed them, and they were, therefore, his people. This is, of course, the same principle by which he claims the right to rule over his people today. Any man who has been redeemed by Christ owes his life to Christ.

The Laws Respecting God

(Ex. 20: 3-11)

The ten commandments were written on two tables of stone; and since they are divided into two classes, it is thought by some that one table contained the laws which stated the duties of the people toward God, while the other one gave their duties toward their fellow men. The first four of these commandments pertained to God, and they gave, as the reader can see, the true views which his people should form of his divine nature, the reverence which they owed to him, and the kind of obedience which they should render him. The other six commandments were duties which they owed to their fellow men. It is thought by some Bible students that the law was given fifty days after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, and that this was the origin of the day of Pentecost.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. This is the first commandment in the Decalogue. It prohibits every species of mental idolatry, as well as all attachment to earthly and sensible things. It has been observed that the very first commandment of the whole series was divinely calculated to prevent man's misery and promote his happiness, by removing him from all false dependence, and leading him to the one true God, who is the source of all good. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be

no variation, neither shadow that is east by turning." (James 1: 17.)

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

The aim of this prohibition was not to forbid the making of images, *per se*; for Moses himself was instructed to make many in connection with the tabernacle service. They were not allowed to make any of these things for worship. The Israelites had been used to such worship all of their lives in Egypt; and it would, of course, be the natural thing for them to do, from the human point of view. In fact, that is exactly what they did do, even before Moses returned to them with the tables of the law. (See Ex. 32: 1ff.)

The term "jealous" may be used in either a good or bad sense. It is used in a good sense here. (Cf. Ex. 34: 14.) The meaning is that God will not tolerate a rival. This is true, not only for God's own honor, but also for the good of his people. He will not suffer any evil influence to mar the righteous character of those who are his. A debasing effect is always seen in the character of those who worship an inferior god. The history of idolatrous Israel shows how God visited iniquity upon the successive generations of those who followed that practice, by withdrawing his divine protection and delivering them into the hands of their enemies. The converse was true in the case of those who were faithful to him. (Cf. Ezek. 18; and the Book of Judges.)

Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. To take God's name in vain is to use it in a way which is contrary to his will. This certainly precludes all profanity, as well as the careless and irreverent use of his name as a byword. But there are other ways of taking the

name of God in vain. For example, we take his name in vain when we profess to honor him, but do not live up to that profession. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 19.)

It will make no difference in the judgment day what the guilty may say regarding their vain use of the name of God, as, for example, they meant no harm in what they said or did, the Lord will not hold them guiltless. (Cf. Matt. 12: 36, 37.) In the words of Adam Clarke, Is it necessary to say to any truly spiritual mind, that all such interjections as *O God! my God! good God! good Heavens!* etc., etc., are formal positive breaches of this law? How many who pass for *Christians* are highly criminal here! God himself will be the Avenger of those who take his name in vain; and they will find that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Cf. Heb. 10: 30, 31.)

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. The motive for keeping the sabbath day, as given in this text, is that Jehovah himself ordained it at the completion of the six days of creation. He set apart the day, and when he gave the law he called upon the Israelites to remember it, that is, keep it in mind, "to keep it holy."

People should try to distinguish between the sabbath as an institution, and the application of it to a given people. When Jesus said that the sabbath was made for man, that is, mankind, he was talking of the principle of the sabbath, rather than its application. (See Mark 2: 27, 28.) So far as the record goes, no other people were required to keep the sabbath in the same manner as the Jews. (Cf. Deut. 5: 15.) That does not necessarily follow, however, that no one else was ever required to sanctify a portion of his time to the Lord. The very expression "Lord's day" indi-

cates that the time embraced in the period is the Lord's in a peculiar sense.

The Laws Respecting Men
(Ex. 20: 12-17)

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. Paul calls this the first commandment with promise. (Eph. 6: 1, 2.) The greatness of this command can easily be seen when one takes into consideration something of the place which his parents have had in his life. Adam Clarke notes that for a considerable time the parents stand, as it were, in the place of God to their children. The honor therefore which is due them is great, and it not only includes respect and obedience, but also material assistance, if and when they need it. (See Mark 7: 10-13.)

Thou shalt not kill. The term "kill" is evidently used here in the sense of murder, and is so rendered in some versions. The reference is, of course, to human beings. Killing is the unintentional taking of life; while murder is the deliberate taking of another life, or violent, unauthorized killing. Jesus taught that it is not necessary for the overt act to be committed, in order for one to be guilty of murder. (Cf. Matt. 5: 21-26; 1 John 3: 15.)

Thou shalt not commit adultery. A person commits adultery when he or she has an unlawful intercourse with the companion of another person; while fornication, being a broader term, includes adultery, as well as the unlawful intercourse between those who are not married. Thus, the commandment which safeguards human life is followed by the one which protects the family and asserts the sanctity of the marriage relationship. (Cf. Matt. 5: 27-32.)

Thou shalt not steal. To steal is to deprive one of that which rightfully belongs to him, whether it be by stealth or by taking advantage of one's ignorance or inexperience in some kind of trade or business transaction. Stealing is possible in every field of endeavor, and it follows therefore that one is a thief who deprives his fellow man of that which is his, without due compensation.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. God will not permit his people to deprive another of his good name, any more than he will permit them to take his material possessions. Bearing false witness against one's neighbor may be done by actually giving false testimony, or by withholding the truth when such will result in injury. This command prohibits all half-truths or talk which we do not know to be true.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. To covet is to have an inordinate, that is, unregulated or unrestrained, desire for that which is another's. It has been called the mother of theft; because, like hatred or a lustful look, it may, and often does, lead to the overt act.

It has been said, and correctly so, that a man's social relationships are the sphere of applied religion. His religion becomes practical when it rules his conduct in everyday living. In the words of John, "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.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

When did the children of Israel reach the wilderness of Sinai?
What can you say of their experience there?
How did the people become a separate nation?
What is the meaning of the term "theocracy"? Consult a dictionary.
What preparation did they have to make before receiving the law?

What effect did the voice of Jehovah have upon them?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were these words spoken?
What does it mean to love God with all of one's heart, soul, and mind?
Who is one's neighbor?
How can one love his neighbor as himself?

The Source of the Ten Commandments

Who spoke the words of this law?
How well established was the law of Moses?
In what way were the Israelites held responsible for it?

What did Jehovah say in his "preface" to the law?
 What right does God have to rule over his people today? Discuss fully.

The Laws Respecting God

In what form were the ten commandments presented to Moses?
 How were they divided?
 What was the significance of the first commandment?
 Were the Israelites forbidden to make any graven images?
 What was the aim, then, of the second commandment?
 In what sense is God jealous?
 How was the iniquity of the fathers visited upon their children?
 In what ways may people take God's name in vain?
 What reason did Jehovah assign for keeping the sabbath day?
 What is the difference between the sabbath as an institution, and its application to a given people?

How do we know that this command was given only to the Israelites?

The Laws Respecting Men

What does it mean to honor one's father and mother?
 What did Paul mean by his statement regarding this commandment?
 What is the difference between killing and murdering?
 What significance did Christ give to this command?
 Why the prohibition against committing adultery?
 What is stealing? and how may it be done?
 How may one bear false witness against his neighbor?
 What does it mean to covet?
 How much of the life of the people did these commandments cover?
 Give a definition of applied religion.
 What does the New Testament say about loving God and one's brother?

Lesson VII—August 14, 1960

THE TABERNACLE

Lesson Text

Ex. 33: 7-16

7 Now Mo'ses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that every one that sought Je-ho'-vah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp.

8 And it came to pass, when Mo'ses went out unto the Tent that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Mo'ses, until he was gone into the Tent.

9 And it came to pass, when Mo'ses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent: and Je-ho'-vah spake with Mo'ses.

10 And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door.

11 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mo'ses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his m i n i s t e r

Josh'-u-a, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.

12 And Mo'ses said unto Je-ho'-vah, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight.

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee, to the end that I may find favor in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

14 And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence.

16 For wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? is it not in that thou goest with us, so that we are separated, I and thy people from all the people that are upon the face of the earth?

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend (Ex. 33: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Psalm 5: 1-17.

Daily Bible Readings

August 8. M. Offerings for the Sanctuary (Ex. 25: 1-9)
 August 9. T. Jehovah the Architect (Ex. 30: 1-10)

- August 10. W.....Sacred Meeting Place (Ex. 29: 38-46)
- August 11. T.....Tent of Meeting (Ex. 33: 7-16)
- August 12. F.....God's House (Acts 7: 44-50)
- August 13. S.....Joy in God's House (Psalm 122: 1-9)
- August 14. S.....The True Tabernacle (Heb. 8: 1-13)

TIME.—A.M. 2513 or B.C. 1491.

PLACE.—In the wilderness before mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

Introduction

We read in Ex. 19: 1 the following: "In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai." And then in Num. 10: 11-13: "And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel set forward according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud abode in the wilderness of Paran. And they first took their journey according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses." (Cf. Deut. 1: 6-8.)

It can easily be seen from these scriptures that the Israelites had dwelt in the wilderness of Sinai eleven months and twenty days. During that time they had received the ten commandments from God himself, and then through Moses a great body of laws which were designed to apply

the ten commandments to the nation as a whole. The ten commandments are sometimes referred to as the constitution of the law of Moses, while the others were given to meet particular needs. It would be helpful to those who study these lessons if they would read the chapters in Exodus between the last lesson and this one.

There were two tents or tabernacles directly connected with the Israelites during their long stay in the wilderness of Sinai. One was called "The tent of meeting" (Ex. 33: 7), and the other "the tabernacle of the testimony" or simply the "Tent" or "tabernacle" (Num. 9: 15-18). The first was used by Moses as a meeting place with Jehovah, while the other was the place of worship. The one about which we are to study today is "The tent of meeting." The other one had not been built at the time of this lesson. (See Ex. 35: 10, 11.) This distinction should be kept in mind throughout this study.

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson for today is found in the body of the text, and

will be considered in its regular order.

The Text Explained

Moses and the Tent of Meeting

(Ex. 33: 7, 8)

Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, a far off from the camp; and he called it The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that every one that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. This is a general statement regarding the purpose of the tent which Moses erected and used in his mediatorial work on behalf of Israel. It is possible that this same tent is referred to in chapter 18, in connection with the visit of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. Verse 7 says, "And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed

him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent." The manner in which the "tent" is mentioned suggests an official tent, rather than a place of residence. (Cf. verse 12.)

And then beginning with Ex. 18: 13 we have the account of Jethro's advice to Moses to appoint men to assist him in the work of judging the people. Moses had been trying to do that alone, and when his father-in-law saw it, he told him that he would wear himself out if he continued at that pace. He then proposed that Moses personally hear all the difficult cases, but that qualified men be given the responsibility of taking care of the smaller matters. Jethro then said,

"If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened unto the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said." (Ex. 18: 23, 24.)

The giving of the law, that is, the ten commandments, and other statutes regarding the Levitical order of worship, which included the tabernacle and that which pertained to it, followed. The people had solemnly pledged themselves to obey the voice of Jehovah (cf. Ex. 24: 3, 7); but it was not long after that until they were dancing around the golden calf which Aaron had made for them. (See Ex. 32: 1-24.) This was followed by the slaying of about three thousand of the rebellious people. Moses then went to God about the matter, pled for their forgiveness, and asked that his own name be blotted from God's book, if they could not be forgiven. But God told him that he would hold each individual responsible for his own sin. (See Ex. 32: 25-35.)

God next gave Moses instruction regarding the march toward Canaan, and assured him that they would reach the land in due time and inherit it; but that he himself would withdraw his presence from them. "For I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people; lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, ye are a stiffnecked people; if I go up in the midst of thee for one moment, I shall consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb onward." (Ex. 33: 3b-6.)

The fact that Jehovah withdrew his presence from the people, and refused to remain in their midst any longer, explains why the tent of Moses was pitched "without the camp, afar off from the camp," or so it seems. It is well to note that Moses called it, *The tent of meeting*. Some Jewish authorities estimate that the location of the tent was two thousand cubits from the camp, the same distance

which was between the ark and the people when they crossed the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua (Josh. 3: 4); and that distance later became known as a sabbath day's journey, probably because the people were allowed to travel that distance on the sabbath day. (Cf. Acts 1: 12.) And inasmuch as the tent was not located in the midst of the camp, as the tabernacle itself was (cf. Num. 2: 1, 2), it became necessary for those who sought Jehovah to go out unto the tent of meeting, "which was without the camp."

And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent. A feeling of consternation appears to have pervaded the entire camp of Israel, when they came to realize what they had lost in God's withdrawing his presence from them. They therefore anxiously watched Moses until he entered into the Tent. It is possible that they did this in the hope that the Lord's blessings could be obtained for them. This also no doubt emphasized the mediatorial office of Moses; for it was he and not they who had access to God.

The Meeting of Jehovah with Moses (Ex. 33: 9-11)

And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent: and Jehovah spake with Moses. This was a conclusive demonstration of God's presence, and of his attitude toward Moses. The appearance of the cloud was miraculous; for it came only when Moses entered into the Tent. The fact that none of the people attempted to go with Moses to the Tent suggests that their sin had separated them from Jehovah. (Cf. Isa. 59: 1, 2.)

And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. As already indicated, the presence of the pillar of cloud at the door of the Tent when Moses entered was evidence of God's approval; and inasmuch as Moses was evidently making intercession for the people, the appearance of the cloud gave them hope; and they rose up, and wor-

shipped. This indicates that they were desirous of a reconciliation with Jehovah.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. In saying that Jehovah spake unto Moses "face to face," the implication is not that Moses saw God's face, as he could see the face of Aaron; for the Bible plainly says that no man can see the face of God and live. (Cf. Gen. 32: 30; 1 Tim. 6: 16; John 1: 18; 1 John 4: 12.) The idea probably is that God spoke directly, and not through the medium of an angel, or in visions and dreams as he did to the prophets. He spoke not as a king to his subject, but as a friend to one whom he trusted. "And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live." (Ex. 33: 20—read verses 17-23.)

And he turned again into the camp: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent. This is indisputable evidence, if further evidence is needed, that the Tent of this lesson was not the tabernacle in which the priests officiated; for Joshua, a member of the tribe of Ephraim, would not have been allowed in that tabernacle. (See Num. 8: 14-21; Josh. 19: 49, 50; Num. 13: 8, 16.) The term "young" in connection with Joshua was probably used with reference to his relation to Moses and his service for he was probably at least sixty years old at this time, as may be gathered from Josh. 24: 29.

We are not told why Joshua departed not out of the Tent, but it may have been because it would not have been proper to leave the place empty, while the period of mediation was still in progress. Moses probably returned to the camp to report to the people concerning what was being done, and to prevent their becoming discouraged because of his long absence. (Cf. Ex. 32: 1.)

A Crisis and Its Solution

(Ex. 33: 12-16)

And Moses said unto Jehovah, See, thou sayest to me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight. It is fair to assume that Moses had returned to the Tent from his

visit in the camp, and that he had resumed his talk with God. Moses had been commissioned to lead the people to the land of promise; but since Jehovah had withdrawn his own presence from them, he was at a loss to know who would go before them. He had, indeed, been told that Jehovah would send an angel before him (verses 1, 2); but Moses, apparently, knew nothing of the character of the angel, whether an earthly or a heavenly messenger; and he was very anxious to be relieved of this state of painful uncertainty.

In studying a lesson like this, we should always try to see something of the application of the principles involved to us. Moses was the great type of Christ, our mediator, and he also illustrates something of the manner in which the Lord expects his people to come to an understanding of what it means to have the leadership of God. Jehovah will never forsake his people when they are willing to follow him; but he wants them to be concerned about their own responsibility.

The term "know" in the latter part of verse 12 is used in the sense of *approve or endorse*. (Cf. Psalm 1: 6; Matt. 7: 23; 2 Tim. 2: 19.) Moses had been deliberately chosen for the work he was doing, and Jehovah had demonstrated his confidence in him by his frequent communion with him. There was no doubt about how God felt toward Moses; but he was anxious to have some assurance regarding the success of his endeavor. He fully realized that he could not succeed without divine help. As Moses saw the matter, God's confidence in him made it essential that he have the additional information regarding the leader.

Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee, to the end that I may find favor in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. This was a plea that God would show him something of his intended procedure toward his people, that is, how he intended for Moses, in subservience to his divine purpose, to accomplish the great task which he had assigned to him. As a further reason for making this request, he reverently called on God to consider the fact that the nation

which he had been commissioned to lead was his people; and as such they should be guided by God's wisdom and in his own way. A failure to do this, Moses reasoned, would be equivalent to abandoning them.

And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. The term "presence" is used in the sense of face, and the meaning is that his personal presence would go with them. The reconciliation between Jehovah and the people had been completed, through their repentance and the intercession of Moses. God is always righteous, and when his people rebel against him he will not bless them, until they repent and turn to him. When a reconciliation between God and man is necessary, it is always essential for man to return to God; for God will never leave man, as long as he will walk in the way of righteousness.

It was pointed out earlier in this lesson that sin separates between God and man: and since it is impossible for God to sin, the responsibility for the estrangement is always upon man. "Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isa. 59: 1, 2.) The plan of reconciliation, so far as we are concerned, is set forth in broad outline in the following passage: "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5: 18-20.)

The "rest" which was promised was probably the entrance into Canaan,

as may be gathered from Deut. 3: 20; but it is not out of place to think of another aspect of rest. There is, as has just been suggested, rest *after* toil; but there is also rest in toil, which is the deep and internal repose of the spirit which is at peace with God. Moses could, of course, enjoy this rest while the march was still in progress; and then, if all went well, the rest after toil in the land of promise. But Moses did not reach the earthly Canaan. However, his death on the top of Pisgah (Deut. 34: 1ff), brought him a greater reward.

And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. This was Moses' way of saying that the journey would be neither safe nor profitable, if God did not go with them. He did not even want to go to Canaan, if they had to go without the divine favor.

For *wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? is it not in that thou goest with us, so that we are separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.* Jamieson notes that God's own words are eagerly caught hold of, and his promise made the subject of a prayer, in the full and just persuasion that the children of Israel could appear a chosen nation, a people for God's own possession, in the eyes of the people of the earth, only by unmistakable evidences of the Divine presence and the favor which that presence would make possible for them in prospering their journey. (Cf. Isa. 63: 7-14.)

Moses, in all the intercessory scene which we have been considering, manifested the disinterested zeal of a patriotic leader, no less than the humble but earnest piety of an eminent saint; and his prayer of faith and labors of love and patience of hope prevailed. This lesson should make us appreciate, more than ever, what it means to us to have one who intercedes for us. (Cf. Heb. 4: 14-16.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today's lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction
How long did the children of Israel remain in the wilderness of Sinai?
What laws were given to them there?

How were the other laws related to the ten commandments?
Did you read the chapters between the last lesson and this one?
What two tents or tabernacles were connected with Israel during their stay in the wilderness of Sinai?

How do we know which was the one of this study?

Moses and the Tent of Meeting

What is said in a general way regarding this tent?

What is meant by "mediatorial work"?

What earlier account do we probably have of this tent?

What advice did Jethro give to Moses? and why?

What occasion soon arose which made Moses' work as a mediator necessary?

What did God do when Israel became rebellious?

In what way did the people show their penitence?

Why did Moses pitch the tent away from the camp?

What well known custom probably grew out of this circumstance?

Why did the people watch Moses so carefully when he went into the tent?

What does it mean to have God's presence with his people?

The Meeting of Jehovah with Moses

In what way did Jehovah show that he was meeting with Moses?

What did this prove regarding his attitude toward Moses?

Show why you think the pillar of cloud was miraculous.

Why didn't some of the people endeavor to go with Moses?

What did they do when they saw the cloud stand at the door of the Tent? Why did they worship?

What did it mean for Jehovah to speak with Moses "face to face"?

Did any human being ever see God's face? Give reasons for your answer.

What did Moses do after meeting with Jehovah? and why?

Who else was with Moses? and why?

What does the fact that Joshua remained in the Tent prove regarding its identity?

In what sense was Joshua a "young man? About how old was he?

Why did Joshua probably remain in the Tent while Moses was away?

A Crisis and Its Solution

Under what circumstances did Moses address the words of this section to Jehovah?

Why was he so concerned about divine leadership?

How may the principles of this lesson be applied to us?

In what sense did Jehovah "know" Moses? and how did he show his confidence in him?

On what basis, then, did Moses ask for divine assurance?

What further motive did Moses ask Jehovah to consider?

What reply did God make to Moses? and on what basis could he make the promise?

Who is responsible for a reconciliation between God and man?

How are people reconciled to God today?

What *rest* did Jehovah promise them?

What reply did Moses make to this assurance?

Lesson VIII—August 21, 1960

PROPER CHOICES IN LIFE

Lesson Text

Deut. 11: 8-12, 26-32

8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandment which I command thee this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go over to possess it;

9 And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which Je-ho'-vah sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 For the land, wither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of E'-gypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs;

11 But the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven,

12 A land which Je-ho'-vah thy God careth for: the eyes of Je-ho'-vah thy God are always upon it, from

the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse:

27 The blessing, if ye shall hearken unto the commandments of Je-ho'-vah your God, which I command you this day;

28 And the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Je-ho'-vah your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

29 And it shall come to pass, when Je-ho'-vah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set the blessing upon mount Ger'-i-zim, and the curse upon mount E'-bal.

30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Ca'-naan-

lies that dwell in the Ar'-a-bah, over against Gil'-gal, beside the oaks of Mo'-reh?

31 For ye are to pass over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which

Je-ho'-vah your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein.

32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

Golden Text.—*"I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed:"* (Deut. 30: 19.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 7: 6-11.

Daily Bible Readings

- August 15. M..... A Nation's Wise Choice (Josh. 24: 14-19)
- August 16. T..... Jerusalem's Choice (Matt. 23: 37-39)
- August 17. W..... Triumphant Faith (Heb. 11: 1-10)
- August 18. T..... Choosing the True God (Ruth 1: 11-18)
- August 19. F..... Solomon's Choice (1 Kings 3: 4-14)
- August 20. S..... Rewards of Obedience (Deut. 11: 8-12)
- August 21. S..... A Blessing Or a Curse (Deut. 11: 26-33)

Time.—A.M. 2553 or B.C. 1451.

Place.—In the land of Moab.

Persons.—Moses and the children of Israel.

Introduction

The lesson for today is the only one in this quarter which is taken from the Book of Deuteronomy; and inasmuch as this book occupies a unique place in Old Testament history, it is not out of order to say a few words about it. The word "Deuteronomy" literally means a second or repeated law. This was made necessary for at least two reasons. (1) The generation which received the law at mount Sinai had passed away; and (2) the people who were about to enter into the land of Canaan needed to have their attention called to the things which God had ordained for them.

The Book of Deuteronomy is largely made up of three addresses which were delivered to the Israelites by Moses, and the time during which he delivered them was the last six weeks of his life. The first address begins, after a brief introduction, with verse 6 of chapter 1, and goes through verse 40 of chapter 4. This address contains a review of the wilderness wanderings, with additional lessons and exhortations. The second address is found in chapters 5-26. Here we find

not only the repetition of some of the laws, but also some new laws, as well as some exhortations concerning all of them. Chapters 27-30 contain the third address, which may be described as a prophetic discourse in which he sets forth the future results of both obedience and disobedience. Some miscellaneous matter, in the form of appendices, make up the closing chapters, 31-34.

In his preface to the Book of Deuteronomy, Adam Clarke says, "The Book of Deuteronomy and the Epistle to the Hebrews contain the best comment on the nature, design, and use of the law; the former may be considered as an evangelical commentary on the four preceding books, in which the spiritual reference and significance of the different parts of the law are given, and given in such a manner as none could give who had not a clear discovery of the glory which was to be revealed. It may be safely asserted that very few parts of the Old Testament Scriptures can be read with greater profit by the genuine Christian than the Book of *Deuteronomy.*"

The Golden Text

"I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed " This passage is found in the final para-

graph of Moses' third and last address to the people whom he had led through the wilderness wanderings for forty years. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, they were all

young people when they left Egypt, or were born in the wilderness itself. Many of them were matured men and women when Moses delivered this message to them; and they were the ones who were to go in and inherit the land which had been promised to their fathers. (Read Deut. 1: 19-40.)

The solemnity of the occasion of the farewell address of a great leader can be matched only by the gravity of the words which he speaks. After telling the people what he had done to make it possible for them to go in and possess the land, Moses continued, "But if thy heart turn away, and thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; ye shall not prolong your days in the land, whither thou passest over the Jordan to go in to possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; to love Jehovah thy God, to obey his voice, and to cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days;

that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deut. 30: 17-20; cf. Acts 20: 25-35; 2 Tim. 4: 1-8.)

The freedom of choice on the part of responsible people is one of the great blessings of life. If this were not true, then it would not be possible to reconcile the words of Moses with either sincerity or common sense. This very freedom to choose one's course in life is that which makes him a responsible person in the sight of God. But the choices of life cannot be postponed indefinitely. The scriptural admonition is, "Choose you *this day* whom ye will serve." (See Josh. 24: 15.) We are, of course, always making choices, but they are not always wise ones; but the choices we do make in the process of living have a tendency to restrict our later choices. A man with tuberculosis can ordinarily recover his health, if he will act in time; but if he chooses to neglect his condition, he will, sooner or later, discover that it is not possible for him to choose life and good health.

The Text Explained

The Basis of Strength and Happiness

(Deut. 11: 8, 9)

Therefore shall ye keep all the commandment which I command thee this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go over to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey. The text of this lesson is taken from the second and longest of the addresses of Moses which are found in the Book of Deuteronomy, and the term "therefore" with which the section begins shows that there is a connection between the text now before us and the preceding part of the address.

Beginning in chapter 10, we read, "And now, Israel, what doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of Jehovah, and his statutes, which I command thee this

day for thy good? Behold, unto Jehovah thy God belongeth heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that is therein. Only Jehovah had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as at this day. . . . Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons: and now Jehovah thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude." (Deut. 10: 12-15, 22.)

The words just quoted tell of their relation to Jehovah, and of the reverence for him which was enjoined. The fact that they had been redeemed and made into a great nation was sufficient reason for requiring them to honor and serve Jehovah. (Cf. Micah 6: 8.) But there was also something else: *it was for their good*. God never commands anyone to obey him in anything which will not be for the good of him who does it. This is true because God is good, and only good. He could not be true to himself, and at the same time ask someone to do something which would be

harmful to him. 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.) It should therefore be the ambition of every redeemed child of God to make an honest effort to obey God in all things.

After reminding them of their relation to God, and his great love for them as reasons for their obedience to him, Moses next cited Jehovah's great power and the terrible judgments which he executed against the disobedient as a further motive for their doing that which he commanded. (Read Deut. 11: 1-7.) In citing these historical facts, Moses meant to emphasize that which God can and will do to those who disobey him. Paul, many years later in writing to the Hebrews, quoted from Deut. 32: 35, 36 in his effort to show the awful results of disobedience. (See Heb. 10: 26-31.) The apostle's conclusion is that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The force of the warning given by both Paul and Moses regarding disobedience may be seen when we consider the fact that Jehovah is a *living* God, which means that all men are hopeless before him. And since his character does not allow him to make any empty threats, all should know that he will do exactly that which he says. Let us all remember, then, that God has the power to inflict the punishment which he deems wise and sufficient; and because he lives for ever, the punishment of the wicked will never end. (Cf. Matt. 25: 46; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9.) There is every reason therefore for doing that which God commands.

But the great aim of the obedience which Moses enjoined upon the Israelites at the time of this lesson was that they might be strong, go in and possess the land which God had promised to them, and prolong their days in it. That obedience, of course, if continued, would also fit them for an eternal home with God in the world to come. As one reads the later history of Israel, he can easily see that which happened to them with respect to these three promises.

A Description of the Land (Deut. 11: 10-12)

For the land, whither thou goest in

to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. It would be difficult to find a more beautiful description of the land of promise, as he contrasted it with the land of their bondage, than the one which Moses gave here. The greater part of the cultivated portions of Egypt consisted of low, level plains, upon which rain seldom fell. It is probably a mistake to say that rain never fell upon Egypt, but it is correct to say that it was a rare phenomenon—perhaps a few drops every ten years, according to some authorities.

This arid condition made it necessary for the people of the land of the Pharaohs to resort to artificial watering, if they wanted their crops to grow. This was comparatively simple along the course of the Nile, as we shall see presently; but even that required labor in contrast with natural rain. But inasmuch as many of us are not accustomed to irrigation, a word regarding it will not be out of order. In speaking of the practice as a whole in the land of Egypt, Jamieson says, "A widely extending plain forms the cultivated portion of Egypt, and on the greater part of this low and level country rain never falls. This natural want is supplied by the annual overflow of the Nile, and by artificial means from the same source—viz., by pole and bucket, the *shadoof* of Modern Egypt, and by other implements—when the river has receded within its customary channel. Close by the bank the process of irrigation is very simple. The cultivator opens a small sluice on the edge of the square bed in which seed has been sown, making drill after drill, and when a sufficient quantity of water has poured in, he shuts them up with his foot. Where the bank is high, the water is drawn up by hydraulic engines, of which there are three kinds used, of different power, according to the subsi-

dence of the stream, simple in construction, and worked by the foot. The water is distributed in small channels or earthen conduits, formed with a mattock by the gardener who directs their course, and which are banked up or opened, as occasion may require, by pressing in the soil with the foot."

W. M. Thomson, who spent much time in studying and writing in Bible lands, often watched the process referred to in our text at work; and in answer to a question, "To what did Moses refer in the eleventh chapter and tenth verse of Deuteronomy?" said, "The reference, perhaps, is to the manner of conducting the water about from plant to plant, and from furrow to furrow in irrigating a garden of herbs. I have often watched the gardener at this fatiguing and unhealthy work. When one place is sufficiently saturated, he pushes aside the soil between it and the next furrow with his foot, and thus continues to do until all are watered. He is thus sometimes knee-deep in mud, and many are the diseases generated by this slavish work."

The contrast between the land of Egypt and Canaan was described as an inducement for Israel's obedience; and when one considers the difference, he marvels that the people did not appreciate their new home more. It is described as a land "flowing with milk and honey," which probably was intended to give some idea of the quality and quantity of its provisions; but it is possible that that was a literal description because of the flocks and herds of the pasture land and the presence of honey bees.

The Blessing and Curse to Be Dramatized (Deut. 11: 26-32)

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if ye shall hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I command you this day; and the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. This section contains the summary of the arguments which Moses had been making for obedience, and it may be stated in two words—blessing and a

curse; words which epitomize hope and fear, which have been called "those two handles of the soul, by which it is caught, held, and managed." This is a clear demonstration of the fact that God has made man a free moral agent, as was pointed out earlier in this lesson. If this were not true, then man could not be rewarded for obeying, or punished for disobeying. This is one of the great portraits of the dignity of man. God has given man a free, self-determining will, and there is no power in the universe but that of his Maker which can force that will to act, and he has solemnly declared throughout the entire Bible that he will never do that. Man therefore will be held accountable for the disposition he makes of that which God has commanded him.

And it shall come to pass, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? For ye are to pass over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

Fuller directions for the observance of this dramatic solemnity was given by Moses in the beginning of his third and final address unto the people of Israel. (See Deut. 27.) The historical account of the actual performance of the solemn rite is found in Josh. 8: 30-35. It should be observed that the command was urgent: it was to be done immediately upon their entering into the land of Canaan. This would enable the people to know exactly how they stood in the presence of God. The record in Joshua says that "he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the assembly of Israel, and the women,

and the little ones, and the sojourners that were among them." (See Josh. 8: 34, 35.)

The minute manner in which Moses described the place to which the people were going, a place which he never saw, can be attributed only to divine instruction. By consulting the map, it can be seen that the two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal, were in that part of the country which was later assigned to the half tribe of

Manasseh, or the Samaria of the New Testament. The "Arabah" was a desert-plain, and "the oaks of Moreh" was one of the first places to which Abraham came when he entered the land of Canaan. (See Gen. 12: 6.) The "Gilgal" was probably the one west of the two mountains, on the border between Manasseh and Dan. There was another city by the same name near Jericho. (Cf. Josh. 5: 9, 10.)

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 the term "Deuteronomy"?
Why was it necessary for the law to be repeated?
What are the principal contents of the Book of Deuteronomy?
What were the general subjects of the three addresses given by Moses?
Discuss the principal value of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Golden Text

To whom did Moses deliver these messages?
From what part of the book is this text taken?
Under what circumstances did Moses speak it?
What effect does the "farewell address" of a great leader usually have?
What does the Bible teach regarding the "freedom of choice"?
What responsibility does this place upon each individual person?

The Basis of Strength and Happiness

What is the significance of the term "therefore" in this connection?
What had Moses just said to the people?
How did he describe their relation to Jehovah? and why?
What has the Lord always required of his people?
Why are all of his commandments "good" for his people?
In what way does Paul apply this principle?
What further motive did Moses cite for their obedience?
What use did Paul later make of the things Moses said to the people?

What is the practical force of the warning which Moses and Paul gave?
Give a summary of the punishment which awaits the disobedient.
What was the great aim of the obedience which Moses enjoined?
What will such obedience ultimately do for one?

A Description of the Land

In what way was the land described?
How was it contrasted with the land of Egypt?
Discuss this contrast.
What is the meaning of watering the crops with the foot?
Why did Moses mention the contrast between the two countries?
What is the meaning of a land "flowing with milk and honey"?

The Blessing and the Curse to Be Dramatized

What is the purpose of this section of our lesson? or why did Moses speak these words?
What were the "blessing" and the "curse"?
In what way do these two words epitomize hope and fear?
In what way does this lesson emphasize the dignity of man?
In what way was this lesson to be dramatized?
Where were these two mountains—Gerizim and Ebal?
Give the facts of its historical observance.
What is said of the urgency of the command?
What lesson is there in this account for us?
How was Moses able to give such a minute description of the land to which they were going, a land which he had never seen?
What and where was the "Arabah"? "The Oaks of Moreh"?
What "Gilgal" was mentioned in this place?

Lesson IX—August 28, 1960

REPORT OF THE SPIES

Lesson Text

Num. 13: 1-3, 25-33

1 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mó'ses, saying,
2 Send thou men, that they may spy out the land of Ca'-naan, which

I give unto the children of Is'-ra-el: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a prince among them.

3 And M6'-ses sent them from the wilderness of Pa'-ran according to the commandment of Je-ho'-vah: all of them men who were heads of the children of Is'-ra-el.

25 And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days.

26 And they went and came to M6'-ses, and to Aar'-6n, and to all the congregation of the children of Is'-ra-el, unto the wilderness of Pa'-ran, to Ka'-desh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

28 Howbeit the people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified, and very great; and moreover we saw the children of A'-nak there.

29 Am'-a-lek dwelleth in the land of the South: and the Hit'-tite, and the Jeb'-u-site, and the Am'-or-ite, dwell in the hill-country; and the Ca'-naan-ite dwelleth by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan.

30 And Ca'-leb stilled the people before M6'-ses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31 But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out unto the children of Is'-ra-el, saying, The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature.

33 And there we saw the Neph'-i-lim, the sons of A'-nak, who come of the Neph'-i-lim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Golden Text.—"Jehovah is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27: 1.)

Devotional Reading.—Psalm 95: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- August 22. M..... Reports of the Spies Desired (Num. 13: 17-24)
- August 23. T..... The Spies Sent Out (Num. 13: 25-33)
- August 24. W..... Distrust and Confidence (Num. 14: 1-10)
- August 25. T..... Effect of Unbelief (Heb. 4: 1-7)
- August 26. F..... Strength of Faith (Josh. 14: 6-12)
- August 27. S..... Our Refuge and Strength (Psalm 46: 1-11)
- August 28. S..... Triumphant Faith (Heb. 11: 1-10)

Time.—A.M. 2514 or B.C. 1490.

Place.—Kadesh-barnea, in the wilderness of Paran.

Persons.—Moses, the twelve spies, and the people.

Introduction

This lesson furnishes a good opportunity to emphasize the necessity of searching the Scriptures for additional facts, before arriving at a definite conclusion regarding a given question. If we should read the narrative regarding the sending of the spies in Numbers alone, we would get the impression that the idea of exploring the land originated with Jehovah; but if we consider the account found in Deuteronomy, it will be seen that the people themselves asked that that be done. So, with all the facts in, it is easy to see why God gave the command to Moses to make

the investigation before the people entered the land.

By consulting the map, it will be seen that the place from which the spies were sent into the land was at the southern end of Canaan. The law was given during the long stay of the Israelites at Sinai, or Horeb; and from there they journeyed in a generally northerly direction to the southern entrance, which was the nearest point to the land of promise. If the people had been willing to go into Canaan from there, there would have been no Jordan to cross; but as it was when they returned to the land

thirty-eight years later, they had to cross the river before they could enter their promised possession. The Jordan has become the type of death to all people who will eventually get to heaven; but if the first sin had not been committed, there would have been no death; just as there would have been no Jordan, if the people had not rebelled against Jehovah.

The entire notion behind the sending of the spies into Canaan was distrust in God. He had described the land to them as being desirable in every way, and had promised to drive the people who were then living there out; but they did not believe in him nor trust his leadership. (Cf. Heb. 3: 7-4: 2.) The result was that they

were turned back into the wilderness, and made to wander there until all that generation perished. The terrible words of God to them were: "But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your dead bodies shall be consumed in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation." (Num. 14: 32-34.) Two of the forty years had already been spent in the wilderness, but thirty-eight more were before them. (See Deut. 2: 14.)

The Golden Text

"Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" This is the spirit which should have actuated the children of Israel when the Lord told them to go in and possess the land; but, like so many of us, they did not trust him. The psalm from which this text is taken is ascribed to David, and it portrays a fearless trust in God. "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? When evil-doers come upon me to eat up my flesh, Even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell. Though a host should encamp against me, My heart shall not fear: Though war should rise against me, Even then will I be confident." (Psalm 27: 1-3.)

But this kind of confidence does not come by accident. David knew that something was expected of him, and therefore he said, "One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire in his temple." (Verse 4.) Whatever may have been his reason for making this request, the psalmist

knew that there is safety only with the Lord; and hence he concludes the psalm with these words, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah In the land of the living. Wait for Jehovah: Be strong, and let thy heart take courage; Yea, wait thou for Jehovah." God never disappoints the trusting soul.

Trust in Jehovah is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. It is emphasized in both the Old and the New Testaments. No one can please God who does not have confidence in his leadership. "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.) This kind of trust in the Lord enables the believer to have confidence in anything which he says, and to trust in his eternal purposes. He can, with Abraham, look unto the promises of God without wavering through unbelief, but with a growing faith giving glory to God; and being fully assured that what he has promised, he is able also to perform. (See Rom. 4: 16-21.)

The Text Explained

Directions for Sending the Spies

(Num. 13: 1-3)

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: As

already indicated in the Introduction, this statement should be considered in the light of the record in Deuteronomy. "And we journeyed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which

ye saw, by the way to the hill-country of the Amorites, as Jehovah our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the hill-country of the Amorites, which Jehovah our God giveth unto us. Behold, Jehovah thy God hath set the land before thee: go up, take possession, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, Let us send men before us, that they may search the land for us, and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up, and the cities unto which we shall come. And the thing pleased me well; and I took twelve men of you, one man for every tribe: and they turned and went up into the hill-country, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and spied it out." (Deut. 1: 19-24.)

The passage just quoted plainly shows that the responsibility for sending the spies into Canaan rested squarely upon the shoulders of the children of Israel. It is true that Moses said that the idea pleased him well, by which he very probably meant that he felt that they were sincere in their request for additional information before going into a new and strange land; and when he brought the matter to God, as doubtless he did, Jehovah gave him instructions to do as they had requested. God is always merciful toward the frailties of his people, and when they are sincere he will give them more light; but when they manifest a lack of trust in him, he often gives them that which they request, and thereby lets them see the folly of their own counsels. (Cf. Ezek. 14: 1-5; 2 Thess. 2: 8-12.)

In giving the people the charge to go up and possess the land, Moses reminded them of the leadership and protection which God had given them through all of their journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea, as they passed through "all that great and terrible wilderness which ye saw"; and, on the basis of their past experience, he bade them have no fear nor be dismayed as they entered the land which was before them. They could trust in God to lead and direct them, but their faith was too weak. It is interesting to note that the term "ter-

rible" is from the same original as the word "reverend" in Psalm 111: 9, and means to be feared or revered.

Of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a prince among them. And Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran according to the commandment of Jehovah: all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel. The names of the twelve men who were selected to spy out the land are given in verses 4-16. They are called in the verse now before us "heads of the children of Israel"; but if the list just referred to is compared with those given in chapters 1 and 10, it will be seen that the idea is that they were leading men, though not of the first rank.

The place from which they were sent was the wilderness of Paran, or, as we learn from Deut. 1, Kadesh-barnea which, of course was their camping place in the wilderness of Paran. Paran was the name given to that vast section of wilderness country which lay between Sinai and Canaan. (See map.) We learn from Gen. 21: 21 that Ishmael dwelt in the wilderness of Paran.

The Discouraging Report

(Num. 13: 25-29)

And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days. Before leaving on their journey, Moses spoke the following words to the twelve men who had been chosen for this mission. "Get you up this way by the South, and go up into the hill-country: and see the land, what it is: and the people that dwell therein, whether they are strong or weak, whether they are few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it is good or bad and what cities they are that they dwell in, whether in camps, or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there is wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land." (See Num. 13: 17-20.)

The spies entered the land of Canaan by way of the South, as we have just seen, and they travelled its entire length to Rehob, to the entrance of Hamath. (See map.) Hebron and the valley of Eshcol, not far from Hebron, were two of the places mentioned in their journey. Hebron was the home of their father Abraham

during much of his stay in the land; and from the valley of Eshcol they obtained a sample of the fruit of the land—a large cluster of grapes which they took on a staff between two of them, probably not because of its great weight, but more to preserve it intact. Verse 20 says that the time of the journey was the time of the first-ripe grapes. They also brought other fruit of the land. (See verse 23.)

And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. In order to appreciate something of the effect the showing of the fruit of the land had on the people, we should keep in mind the fact that they had spent two years in the wilderness. God had told them of the rich provisions which the land afforded, but they did not believe him. This part of the spies' report must have caused much rejoicing in the camp, as the next verse indicates.

And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Howbeit the people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very great; and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. Amalek dwelleth in the land of the South; and the Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanite dwelleth by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan. The significance of the report of the ten spies hinges on the term "howbeit." Their report of the productivity of the land was just as correct as that of the two. "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it" There is no doubt or disagreement about that, **BUT THERE ARE GIANTS IN THE LAND!**

That was the other side of their story. It was a good land all right, but it was a land which any unarmed people might well be afraid to attack. They said that they had seen cities which were both great and walled up to heaven, and the men were so towering as to strike fear to the hearts of any who tried to go up

against them. They completely left God out of the picture, notwithstanding the fact that he had promised to be with them and drive out their enemies. These people just didn't believe that, any more than we believe that God can make all things work together for our good, if we love him and are called according to his purpose. (See Rom. 8: 28.)

The lesson now before us is a classic illustration of the fact that a half truth is in reality a falsehood. The ten spies, in spite of the truth they told, created a false impression which was made the basis of their discouraging report.

The Minority versus the Majority (Num. 13: 30-33)

And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. This was a plea of faith. Joshua and Caleb had seen the people of the land, but they believed that Jehovah would drive them out, just as he had promised. He had brought them through the "great and terrible wilderness," and he certainly could take care of them in the land of Canaan. The difference between the attitude of the two and the ten spies may be summed up in this way: The ten measured themselves against trained soldiers and giants, and were in despair; while the two measured the inhabitants of the land against God, and were jubilant. Joshua and Caleb did not dispute the facts which the ten reported, but they reversed the implied conclusion, because they added the one fact which made all the difference, namely, the help of God. There is a difference in the way the same facts strike a man who lives by faith, and one who lives by calculation. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 7; Phil. 4: 13.)

But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. The fact that the ten arrayed themselves against the two was not due to intellectual disparity. As has already been pointed out, they all saw the same things, but they differed in their interpretation of the facts and what they should do about the matter. It was a question of religion which separated the spies and brought them into violent colli-

sion. The majority looked at the problem from the standpoint of their own strength, while the minority viewed it from the standpoint of God's promise, and simply thought of themselves as links in a firmly welded chain of his unwavering providential decrees. (Cf. Deut. 33: 25b.)

And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. The report of the ten spies is here branded as being evil; they simply created a false impression by distorting the facts. It was true that there were men of great stature in the land, but the majority in all probability exaggerated their size, as may be seen by their reference to the grasshoppers.

The Nephilim were mentioned in Gen. 6: 4, and from the history of the term it appears that these men were characterized, not so much by their great physical size (they must have been unusually large), but rather as men of violence, overbearing, and

who plundered the weak and defenseless. They appear to have been marauding nomads. This may have been what the false spies meant by saying that the land ate up the inhabitants.

Moses, in his first address to the people just before they did enter the land, summed up the situation created by the false report of the ten spies in these words: "Whither are we going up? our brethren have made our hearts to melt, saying, The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. Jehovah your God who goeth before you, he will fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that Jehovah thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came unto this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe Jehovah your God, who went before you in the way, to seek you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in the cloud by day." (Deut. 1: 28-33.) The tragic results are graphically told in Num. 14.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What good opportunity does this lesson furnish for profitable Bible study?
Who originated the idea of sending spies into the land of Canaan?
Where were the people at the time the spies were sent?
Discuss the circumstances which led up to their being sent.
Of what has the river Jordan become a type?
Show how this came about.
What was the basic reason behind the request for sending the spies?
What did Jehovah say to the people regarding it?
Why were they forced to wander in the wilderness "forty" years?

The Golden Text

Why is this text so important?
Under what circumstance was the psalm containing it composed?
How may one come to have this kind of confidence in the Lord?
What does the New Testament teach regarding our trust in God?
How did Paul illustrate this kind of confidence?

Directions for Sending the Spies

Discuss Moses' address to the people regarding the sending of the spies.
What probable reason prompted Moses to say that the idea pleased him?
Why did Jehovah grant their request for spying out the land?
What basic lesson is there here for us?
What encouragement did Moses give them to enter the land?
Why was the wilderness described as being "terrible"?
Upon what basis were the spies selected?
In what sense were they "heads of the children of Israel"?
What and where was the wilderness of Paran?
What instruction did Moses give the men before they started on their journey?
How long were they gone? and how much of the territory did they cover?
What kind of fruit did they bring back with them?
What was the probable reason for carrying the grapes on a staff between two men?
What two places which they visited are mentioned?
What effect did the showing of the fruit probably have on the people?
Give a general summary of their report.

In what way did the ten create a wrong impression, or give a false report? Discuss the significance of the term "howbeit" or "but." What was the basic reason for their evil report? What application does this principle have to us? Of what was the action of the ten a classic example?

The Minority versus the Majority

Upon what did Joshua and Caleb base their report?

What was the real difference between the minority and the majority reports?

How is it that the same facts sometimes have a different effect upon different people?

Why did the ten array themselves against the two?

Why were the two so confident?

Why did the majority say that the land ate up the inhabitants?

What was Moses' reaction to the false report?

What were the tragic results of it?

Lesson X—September 4, 1960

JOSHUA SUCCEEDS MOSES

Lesson Text

Num. 27: 18-20; Josh. 1: 1-9

18 And Je-ho-vah said unto Mó-ses, Take thee Josh'-u-a the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him;

19 And set him before E-le-a'-zar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

20 And thou shalt put of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Is'-ra-el may obey.

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Mo'-ses the servant of Je-ho'-vah, that Je-ho'-vah spake unto Josh'-u-a the son of Nun, Mo'-ses' minister, saying,

2 Mó-ses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Is'-ra-el.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Mo'-ses.

4 From the wilderness, and this Leb'-a-non, even unto the great river, the river Eu-phra'-tes, all the land of the Hit'-tites, and unto the great sea

toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Mó-ses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Mó-ses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Je-ho'-vah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Golden Text.—"Be strong and of good courage; . . . for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Josh. 1: 9.)

Devotional Reading.—Prov. 2: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

- August 29. M.....Joshua's First Battle (Ex. 17: 8-16)
- August 30. T.....Joshua, Moses' Minister (Ex. 24: 12-18)
- August 31. W.....Joshua's Consecration (Num. 27: 15-23)
- September 1. T.....Moses' Charge to Joshua (Deut. 31: 1-9)
- September 2. F.....Joshua, Israel's New Leader (Josh. 1: 1-11)
- September 3. S.....Joshua Warns Israel (Josh. 1: 12-18)
- September 4. S.....Joshua's Genealogy (1 Chron. 7: 20-27)

TIME.—A.M. 2553 or B.C. 1451.

PLACE.—The plains of Moab.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and Joshua.

Introduction

Because of his fatal mistake in failing to sanctify Jehovah in the eyes of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah, Moses was not permitted to lead them across the Jordan into the land of Canaan. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, and behold the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered; because ye rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the waters before their eyes. (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) (Num. 27: 12-14; see 20: 1-13; Psalm 106: 32, 33; cf. Deut. 32: 48-52; 34: 1-4.)

Moses, like many other great men, was born of lowly parents and in the midst of humble circumstances; but through the providence of God he reached a greatness which few men of earth have ever attained. (Cf. Deut. 34: 10-12.) The secret of his great success may be learned from the inspired record concerning him, especially Heb. 11: 24-27. But some of the most affecting words regarding him are found in the first of his farewell addresses to the people shortly before his death. "And I besought Jehovah at that time, saying, O Lord Jehovah, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy strong hand: for what god is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and ac-

ording to thy mighty acts? Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But Jehovah was wroth with me for your sakes, and hearkened not unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up unto the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see." (Deut. 3: 23-28.)

This decree by Jehovah made it necessary that a new leader be selected to take the place of Moses. "And Moses spake unto Jehovah, saying, Let Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of Jehovah be not as sheep which have no shepherd." (Num. 27: 15-17.) Joshua, the man who was selected, had been the faithful assistant to Moses during practically all the time they were in the wilderness; and he had proved himself worthy of the confidence which was placed in him, and the honor which was bestowed upon him, as we shall see in the consideration of the lesson now before us.

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is a part of the regular text, and will be considered in due order.

The Text Explained

Joshua Chosen as Moses' Successor

(Num. 27: 18-20)

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put of thine

honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may obey. This was Jehovah's answer to the request of Moses that a successor to him be appointed. (See verses 15-17.) It will be both interesting and helpful if both the teacher and students will read the principal facts regarding the service of Joshua while

he was being prepared for the responsibility which would be his after Moses was gone. (See Ex. 17: 8-16; 24: 13; 32: 15-20; 33: 11; Num. 11: 26-30; 13: 1-14; 38.) Joshua, of course, did not know during the time of his earlier service and training that he would succeed Moses, but when the time came he was ready. This is the principle which should guide people in the selection of church leaders. Potential leaders should prove their fitness for the work first. (Cf. 1 Tim. 3: 10.)

The laying on of the hands of Moses was a part of the ordination of Joshua. This was done at the direction of the Lord, and was in token of Moses' transferring the government to Joshua, as the laying of hands on the head of the sacrifice put it in the place and instead of the one making the offering. (Cf. Ex. 29: 10; Num. 8: 5-13.) The laying on of hand was also intended to put of the honor of Moses upon Joshua, so that the people would obey him. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses." (Deut. 34: 9.) The laying on of hands is preeminently mentioned in connection with the appointment of church leaders (cf. Acts 6: 3-6; 13: 1-3; 1 Tim. 5: 22); but there is no indication that any miraculous power was conferred by the practice.

The Transfer of Responsibility

(Josh. 1: 1-5)

Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Moses had died on mount Nebo, and Jehovah had buried him; and no human being knew of the place of his grave. (See Deut. 34: 1-6.) The people mourned for him thirty days, the customary period of public mourning (verse 8). It was following this period of mourning that Jehovah spoke unto Joshua, the "official attendant" or "prime minister" of Moses.

The fall of a great leader is a sum-

mons to others to assume that role. God, of course, does not speak directly to men today, but the principle is the same. The death of an outstanding church leader should stimulate others to take up his work; for he best honors his dead who arises and takes up his work with a resolute heart and a strong faith that God will be with him. As Jowett notes, What we do in our bereavement is very momentous. We can sit down and mope in ever-deepening melancholy, or we can take up our appointed work. It was Ezekiel who said, "So I spake unto the people in the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded." (Ezek. 24: 18.)

The Jordan is the only large river in Palestine, and the most peculiar river in the world; almost the whole of its course is below the level of the sea. Its length from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea is, in an air line, about sixty-five miles, but in flowing that distance it travels some two hundred miles, so crooked is the channel. According to Wells, there are twenty-seven fierce rapids between the two seas just mentioned. "The whole of its course, from the lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea, is through a valley varying in width from four to fourteen miles, and hemmed in on either side by mountains that rise from fifteen hundred to three thousand feet, so that the valley of the Jordan is the lowest land on the surface of the globe, the Jordan is the lowest river, the Dead Sea, the lowest water. ... In order to understand how the river appeared when it was thus out of its banks, let me state that the valley, fourteen miles wide, lies about seventy-five feet higher than the bed of the river. As you walk across the valley toward the river, you come to a bluff, not very steep usually—in some places too steep for a horse to go down, in others a gradual slope—and you look down seventy-five feet into a river bottom, from a half to a mile wide. Now a river which falls as rapidly as the Jordan (falling nearly seven hundred feet in sixty miles), has a rapid current when it is low; but when it is so swollen that it leaves its crooked channel, and its waters rush in a direct line toward their resting place, we can see at once with what a terrific force it plunges along. And as

the valley is full of small trees and underbrush, thick and rank of growth, you can see that, as the water would be tearing its way over the brush and the tree tops, it would be a fearful sight to look at, and to think of marching across it would appear preposterous." (McGarvey.)

The command to cross over the Jordan should be understood in the light of these physical characteristics of the Jordan. (Cf. Josh. 3: 15.) The great multitude of people, probably close to three million, were commanded to arise, and go over this Jordan. That was a mighty host to lead across such a river, and it required faith on the part of Joshua and the people. This was the land which they had refused to enter from the south thirty-eight years before. (See Deut. 1: 19ff; 2: 14.)

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses. From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border. In commenting on the fact that God had given the land to his people, it should be noted that the whole land of Canaan was Israel's by deed of gift, but it still had to be claimed by them from the people who then inhabited the country. The cities were theirs, but they had to take them and inhabit them. It should not be difficult for us to realize the significance of these things; for God has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in Christ, but they are not actually ours until we have appropriated them by a living and obedient faith. They are ours only as we avail ourselves of them.

The boundary of the promised possession was very specific. The "wilderness" was the Arabian desert to the south; "this Lebanon" was the Lebanon mountain range to the north; the eastern border was the "river Euphrates;" while the western boundary was the "Mediterranean Sea" toward the going down of the sun. The Hittites occupied the southern extremities of the land, and they were mentioned probably because of their superior strength, being most likely the dominant tribe of the country. It must have been most encouraging for

Joshua and the people to be assured of conquering such an enemy. It was not until the days of David and Solomon that Israel actually possessed the full extent of this grant. (Cf. 2 Sam. 8: 1-18; 1 Chron. 18: 3, 14; 1 Kings 4: 21.) It is possible that Josh. 21: 43-45; 23: 14 referred more particularly to Canaan proper.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. This was a wonderful promise to a man who was to lead a host in the conquering of a land, something they had never tried before. This kind of a promise does not lull a true servant of God into lazy security, nor makes him careless; on the contrary, it is the very thing which nerves him for sustained exertion. Joshua had the same assurance of God's presence that Moses enjoyed; and that is always true of anyone who is called into the Lord's service. The gracious promise which is made here is quoted in the New Testament. (See Heb. 13: 5, 6.)

Jehovah's Charge to Joshua (Josh. 1: 6-9)

Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Joshua as Hastings points out, had need of great strength and courage, for the task which had been assigned him was one of the most difficult ever entrusted to any great leader. He was to lead the people through a series of brilliant and exciting military successes, and then turn them to the most peaceful pursuits. He was to teach them to shed blood without pity, and harden them to the sight of destroying towns and cities, and then enforce laws which were in many instances singularly humane. It has been said that the Romans conquered like savages, but ruled like philosophic statesmen. It was that kind of transition which Israel had to accomplish; and it was into the strong hand of Joshua that this delicate task was committed.

Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou

mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. As then, so now, strength and courage are required to do that which God has ordained for his people, and this is especially true when people on every hand are neglecting or rejecting his way of life. Joshua, and all others who meet with God's approval, must keep all the law, and not that part which pleases them or which does not run counter to that which they are already doing. (Cf. James 2: 10.)

The expression "good success" should not be overlooked in this study. Do these words imply that there is a *success* which is not good? There is, of course, something which the world calls successful which is not good. Jesus says, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life." (Matt. 16: 26.) A striking illustration of this truth is found in Luke 12: 13-21. Good success, therefore, is that which is pleasing in God's sight. (Cf. Prov. 3: 5, 6.)

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. This, as everyone can see, is God's definition of prosperity and good success, namely, the faithful observance of that which he commands. The mere reading of the Bible is not enough; meditation is also essential. (Cf. Psalm 1: 2.) When one muses and reflects upon that which God has spoken, he not only will reach a better understanding of it, but will also be better able to retain it. The pondering of the divine message is a practice we cannot afford to neglect. The marginal reading for "have good success" is *deal wisely.* (See James 1: 5-8.)

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. The fact that God has spoken should be suf-

ficient for everyone; and it is for those who believe in him. No finer illustration of this can be found than that which is seen in the different attitudes manifested by Joshua and by those who refused to go into the promised land from Kadesh-barnea, thirty-eight years before. Jehovah promised to be with them. (See Deut. 1: 29-32.) But how different it was with Joshua! (See Joshua 21: 43-45.)

In order to appreciate the great success which attended Joshua, consider the following: After Jehovah's charge to him, Joshua gave his charge to the people. Spies were then sent to Jericho, and preparations were made to cross the Jordan. It appears that the miraculous parting of the waters of the river were twofold. (1) To stamp the seal of God's approval upon Joshua, and (2) to encourage the people by the assurance that Jehovah was fighting for them. The new leader was therefore put on a level with Moses, and the people of that generation were placed on a par with those who crossed the Red Sea after it had been divided.

Following the first encampment in the land of promise at Gilgal, the people circumcised those of their number who were born in the wilderness, kept the passover; and it was there that the manna ceased. Jericho was the first stronghold to be taken. It was the key to the country, and its fall made a deep impression upon the inhabitants of the land. The plan of conquest first included the south part of Canaan, and then the north. In the first six years, six nations with thirty-one kings fell before Joshua and his conquering army, and among them the Anakim who had been such a terror to Israel when they first spied out the country. It should be borne in mind that the extensive conquests were not intended to achieve complete extirpation of the Canaanites at once. (Cf. Ex. 23: 29, 30.) There appears to have been two basic reasons for the destruction of the people of Canaan: (1) their excessive wickedness, Lev. 18: 2-25; and (2) the contamination of their example, Deut. 7: 1-5.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction
Why was Moses not permitted to enter the land of Canaan?

What specific sin did he commit?
 What does the Bible say about his greatness?
 What was the secret of his great success?
 Give a summary of his statement regarding his request to enter Canaan.
 What request did Moses next make?
 Who was selected to succeed him? and why?

Joshua Chosen as Moses' Successor

What were some of the qualifications which Joshua possessed?
 Give some of the principal facts regarding his previous service.
 Upon what basis should church leaders today be chosen?
 Why did Moses lay his hands upon Joshua? Discuss fully.
 What does the New Testament teach regarding this practice?

The Transfer of Responsibility

Where and under what circumstances did Moses die?
 Who buried him? and where?
 How long did the people mourn for him?
 What relationship did Joshua sustain toward Moses?
 What should the passing of a great leader summon others to do?
 Why is what we do in the hour of bereavement momentous?
 How did Ezekiel show his great faith in this respect?
 Give a brief description of the river Jordan.
 Why is it necessary to understand something of the physical features of the

river in order to appreciate this lesson?
 What was the condition of the river when they were commanded to cross it?
 What was the relation between God's giving Israel the land, and their possessing it?
 What lesson is there in this for us?
 Give the boundary of the land promised to the people.
 When did they actually come into possession of all of it?
 What gracious promise was made to Joshua?
 What New Testament use is made of it?

Jehovah's Charge to Joshua

Why was Joshua in need of such great strength and courage?
 Discuss the nature of the work he was called upon to accomplish?
 What admonition did Jehovah give him regarding the law?
 Show that this same principle is applicable to us.
 What is the meaning of "good success"?
 How may one always be sure of it? discuss fully.
 What is God's definition of prosperity and success?
 Why is meditation upon God's word so essential?
 Why is the fact that God has spoken sufficient for every believer?
 Give a general summary of Joshua's success in conquering Canaan.
 What were the probable reasons for parting the waters of the Jordan?
 Why were so many of the people of the land destroyed?

Lesson XI—September 11, 1960

THE FALL OF JERICHO

Lesson Text

Josh. 6: 12-20

12 And Josh'-u-a rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Je-ho'-vah.

13 And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Je-ho'-vah went on continually, and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; and the rearward came after the ark of Je-ho'-vah, *the priests* blowing the trumpets as they went.

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Josh'-u-a said unto the people, Shout; for Je-ho'-vah hath given you the city.

17 And the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to Je-ho'-vah: only Ra'-hab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 But as for you, only keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when ye have devoted it, ye take of the devoted thing; so would ye make the camp of Is'-ra-el accursed, and trouble it.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy unto Je-ho'-vah: they shall come into the treasury of Je-ho'-vah.

20 So the people shouted, and *the priests* blew the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith"* (1 John 5: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Josh. 7: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

September 5. M.....	Jericho Besieged (Josh. 6: 1-11)
September 6. T.....	The Fall of Jericho (Josh. 6: 12-20)
September 7. W.....	Sun Stands Still (Josh. 10: 12-21)
September 8. T.....	Seven Kings Conquered (Josh. 10: 28-33)
September 9. F.....	Joshua Conquers the Land (Josh. 11: 16-23)
September 10. S.....	Victory Through Faith (1 John 5: 1-4)
September 11. S.....	Victories of Faith (Heb. 11: 30-40)

TIME.—A.M. 2553, or B.C. 1451.

PLACE.—Jericho.

PERSONS.—Joshua, the priests, and the hosts of Israel.

Introduction

The most outstanding characteristic of Joshua, according to the Biblical account, was that of a soldier. He was the leader in the battle with Amalek when he first appears in history. Other soldiers of the Bible had strongly marked characters of their own, aside from their military activities, such as David and the centurians of the Gospel Records and Acts; but with Joshua there was very little else in his life which was noteworthy, except that which pertained to his work as a soldier. He was a military leader practically all of his life.

It is remarkable how often it is said to him, "Be strong and of good courage"; "only be strong and very courageous"; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed." But it should be observed that this courage was not of the world, but of God. It was founded on the faith which he had in Jehovah and his word. He was called upon to execute the purposes of God, and the call was always accompanied by the promise, "I will be with thee." Jehovah's words to Joshua were, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor

forsake thee. ... Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Josh. 1: 5, 9b.)

The effect which the passing of Israel over the Jordan had on the natives of Canaan is graphically told in the first part of Josh. 5. "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, that were beyond the Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, that were by the sea, heard how that Jehovah had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. (Josh. 5: 1.) The people of Canaan had no idea that Israel could cross the flooded Jordan (Josh. 3: 15), and for that reason they did not feel the need of disputing their passage; but when they learned that they had actually passed over, they were seized with a deadly fear, and that explains why the city of Jericho "was straitly shut up." (Josh. 6: 1.) The taking of that city was the first major victory in the conquest of the land.

The Golden Text

"This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith"
The words of this text are found in a letter which the apostle John wrote to some Christians who lived within the borders of the great Roman Empire. These people, as a rule, occupied humble positions, being without very much wealth, learning, or in-

fluence. And, too, they were surrounded by a society which tolerated evils and vices of the worst type; and since the people who practiced these things usually stood in the favor of the state, the servants of the Lord seemed to be helpless in the presence of a wicked world. But John assured his brethren that there was a victory

for them—not a victory which is pronounced so by the world, but the victory of faith.

It should be observed that John does not say that faith is the means by which the world is overcome, nor that by faith the battle is fought and the victory is won; he says that faith itself is the victory. This apostolic teaching does not bid us marshal our forces against the world. It does not require us to array on one side faith, while the world is on the other side, and then assure us that when the weary fight is over, the world will be defeated. That is not the meaning of this passage. John is saying that faith draws us up into a higher plane, and leaves the world far below. It allows wickedness to have its way for the time being (cf. Matt. 13: 27-30), while it places before the soul the eternal realities—heaven and hell, life and death, the power of God's word, the influence of prayer, the ministration of angels (cf. Heb. 1: 14), the watchful love of an overruling Providence, and all that God,

Christ, and the Holy Spirit mean to the devoted child of God. This is the faith which causes the world to lose its influence with the Christian.

But the New Testament also teaches that the capture of Jericho was a victory of faith. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days." (Heb. 11: 30.) What, then, are some of the characteristics of this faith? (1) It was a faith which ventured to do that which God commanded, or, in other words, it was a faith which was willing to obey God in all he required. (2) It was a faith which could discipline its possessor. (See Josh. 6: 10.) Their silence was as essential as their shouting. (3) It was a patient faith, that is, it could continue its repetitious obedience as long as God required it. (Cf. Lam. 3: 26; Isa. 64: 4.) (4) It is a faith which appropriates that which God gives. (See Josh. 6: 2.) But that gift was conditioned on their compassing the city thirteen times, and otherwise obeying God.

The Text Explained

The Obedience of Faith

(Josh. 6: 12-14)

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Jehovah. And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Jehovah went on continually, and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; and the rearward came after the ark of Jehovah, the priests blowing the trumpets as they went. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

It is natural for one to think that Joshua was probably looking over the situation and wondering how the attack should be made, when the closing paragraph of chapter five is read: "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord

unto his servant? And the prince of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, Put off thy shoe from off thy foot for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." (Josh. 5: 13-15.)

Joshua had been told by Jehovah before he entered the land of Canaan that he would be victorious in the conquest of the land, but that did not imply that the campaign was to be conducted according to Joshua's idea of military strategy. The appearance of the angel to Joshua made it clear that there was a commander over him. Joshua must take his orders from the "prince of the host of Jehovah"; but it was not his plan that the city should be taken by the might of armed men. God through his own power would topple the stupendous walls in which the heathen Canaanites put their trust.

The principle involved here cannot be too strongly emphasized. Whatever God authorized men to do must be done according to his will. (Cf. Isa. 55: 8f.) Joshua thought that he was the captain, but he soon learned that he was not. When he heard the angelic answer to his question as to which side he was on, "Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship,

and said unto him, *What saith my lord unto his servant?*" It was then that the angel taught Joshua the same lesson of reverence which Moses received when God called him to deliver the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage. (See Ex. 3: 5.) That is the first lesson which any person must learn, if he desires the blessings of God. (Cf. Lev. 10: 3; Tit. 3: 5; Acts 22: 10.)

After Joshua learned that he must take his orders from the prince of Jehovah's host, the divine plan of attack was revealed unto him. (Head Josh. 6: 1-11 carefully) This was one of the many instances in which God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 26-29.) Israel doubtless wondered, but they obeyed. The people of Jericho also probably wondered, and they may have laughed too. How could they be harmed with a company of marchers and the blast of trumpets? But they did not know that the "ark of Jehovah" was also circling the city.

The Shout of Victory (Josh. 6: 15, 16)

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times; only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for Jehovah hath given you the city. For six days the ark was carried around the city of Jericho, put the walls of the city were unaffected. On the seventh day, while the inhabitants of the city no doubt continued to sneer, the priests continued to blow their trumpets and the Israelites went around the city seven times; and when the last trip had been completed, Joshua called on the people to utter a great shout; "for," said he, "Jehovah hath given you the city." It was then that the walls fell down flat upon the ground; and it is certain that no one, inside the city or out, regarded the destruction as being due to human effort. The Israelites had simply obeyed Jehovah, and he had torn down the walls. At one moment they had stood impregnable, but at the next they had crumbled in ruins.

The people of Israel had only to reap the victory; but it was Jehovah who had brought it about.

It should be observed that twice in the chapter now before us the statement is made that Jehovah had given the Israelites the city of Jericho—once before they had done anything and once after they had done that which the Lord commanded. Any person who will read the inspired record will see that the gift was not conditional. God gave, but people had to accept; Jehovah commanded, but they had to obey. Everyone knows that if the people had refused to do as they were told, the city would not have been theirs. Jericho was delivered to them *after* they obeyed.

The obedience which the Lord's people rendered on the occasion of this lesson was the obedience of faith. This kind of obedience results from faith, and from nothing else. Those who render such obedience have faith in the Lord, and that faith leads them to do exactly as he commands them. Such obedience always tests the faith of those who render it. God has seen fit in every age of the world to justify men on the principle of faith, and he has always selected such acts of obedience as would adequately test the faith of those who desired his blessings. (Cf. James 2: 22.) The principle has always marked the difference between those who are pleasing to the Lord, and those who are not acceptable to him. (Cf. Gen. 3: 1-6; Mark 18: 15, 16; Gal. 1: 6-9.)

A Devoted City (Josh. 6: 17-20)

And the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to Jehovah: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. The term "devoted," as used here, means devoted to destruction. "No one devoted, that shall be devoted from among men, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death." (Lev. 27: 29.) "But of the cities of these peoples, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them: the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; as

Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee; that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods so would ye sin against Jehovah your God." (Deut. 20: 16-18. See also verses 10-15.)

The word "devoted" is also used in a good sense in the Bible. (See Lev. 27: 16-21, 28.) In that case it is consecrated for a good purpose. Thus it can be seen that certain things could be *devoted* to the Lord, either for a sacred use or for total destruction. The verse following the lesson text for today shows that Israel devoted Jericho to destruction. "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." (Josh. 6: 21.) Following the destruction of Jericho, Joshua, evidently speaking for the Lord, pronounced a curse upon the man who should rebuild the city. "And Joshua charged them with an oath at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before Jehovah, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: with the loss of his first-born shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." (Josh. 6: 26.)

It appears from this curse that it was the will of God that the city remain in perpetual desolation as a memorial of his abhorrence of idolatry and its attendant vices, but it also seems that he left man to exercise the freedom of his own will regarding the matter. But he did forecast the penalty if the city should be rebuilt, as we have already seen. The city was rebuilt about five hundred and fifty years later, and the following statement is a record of the fulfillment of this prophecy: "In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun." (1 Kings 16: 34.) This was in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, who did "more to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." (See verse 33.)

The only people of Jericho who

were allowed to live were Rahab the harlot and those of her family. This was because of the kindness which she showed to the two spies whom Joshua had sent to "view the land, and Jericho." (Read Josh. 2: 1-24; 6: 22-25; cf. Heb. 11: 31; James 2: 25.) Rahab is called a harlot, but it appears that that term, as used by the Jews, sometimes meant simply an innkeeper. This was the view of Josephus and others. It is possible that this same Rahab is mentioned in Matt. 1: 5. This, however, is questioned by some authorities.

But as for you, only keep yourselves from this devoted thing, lest when ye have devoted it, ye take of the devoted thing; so would ye make the camp of Israel accursed, and trouble it. The marginal reading for "accursed" is *devoted*. We learn from other scriptures that the people were usually permitted to take the spoil of the cities which they captured. (Cf. Josh. 8: 27.) But Jericho was made an exception. Joshua warned the people that if they took the things which were devoted to destruction unto themselves, they would also be devoted to ruin. (Cf. Deut. 13: 16-18.) The account of the sin of Achan in this respect is given in the seventh chapter of Joshua, which should be read. And it should be observed that the whole camp of Israel was held responsible for his sin, although they knew nothing about it, until he was punished for it. "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the devoted thing; for Achan . . . took of the devoted thing; and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of Israel." (Josh. 7: 1.)

But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy unto Jehovah: they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah. These were among the *devoted* things of the city, but instead of being destroyed they were to be consecrated for a holy use. It is possible that these things were used in the service of the tabernacle. At any rate, they belonged to Jehovah who had destroyed the city, and he could do with them as he pleased.

So the people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout,

and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. This is the ac-

count of what happened after Joshua told the people what to do when they entered the city, as recorded in verses 17-19.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

For what was Joshua especially noted?
Compare him with other great soldiers of the Bible.
What were some of the exhortations which were given to him? and why?
Upon what was his great courage founded?
What special promise did Jehovah make him?
What effect did the passing of Israel over the Jordan have on the people of Canaan?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text written?
Why would the people to whom the words were addressed need the message?
In what sense is faith the victory which overcomes the world?
In what other sense may we have a victory of faith?
What are the chief characteristics of this faith?

The Obedience of Faith

What vision did Joshua have just before the destruction of Jericho?
What was the probable purpose of the vision?
How was Joshua affected by it?
Compare the beginning of Joshua's work with that of Moses, especially with reference to the meaning and need of reverence.
What was the plan of attack which was devised for the capture of Jericho?
Upon what principle was this plan based?

What was probably the feeling of the inhabitants of the city? and why?

The Shout of Victory

Describe the strategy of the seventh day.
What caused the walls of the city to fall?
How was this regarded by the people, both inside and outside the city?
When did Jehovah give the children of Israel Jericho—before or after? Give reasons for your answer.
What is meant by the obedience of faith? Discuss fully.
How does the plan (obedience of faith) work?
Show how this principle marks the difference between God's people and those who are not pleasing to him.

A Devoted City

What is the meaning of the term "devoted"?
Point out the two ways in which the term was applied in obeying Jehovah.
Why were these heathen people to be utterly destroyed?
Why was a curse pronounced upon the man who should rebuild Jericho?
When and under what circumstances was this prediction fulfilled?
What exceptions to the total destruction of Jericho were made?
Who was Rahab? and why was she spared?
What other uses were made of her in the Scriptures?
What command did Joshua give the Israelites regarding the spoil of the city?
What record of violation is recorded? and what effect on the people?
What did the people do just before the walls of the city fell?

Lesson XII—September 18, 1960

JOSHUA AND CALEB

Lesson Text

Josh. 14: 6-15

6 Then the children of Ju'-dah drew nigh unto Josh'-u-a in Gil'-gal: and Ca'-leb the son of Je-phun'-neh the Ken'-iz-zite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mo'-ses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Ka'-desh-bar'-ne-a.

7 Forty years old was I when Mo'-ses the servant of Je-ho'-vah sent me from Ka'-desh-bar'-ne-a to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart.

8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of

the people melt; but I wholly followed Je-ho'-vah my God.

9 And Mo'-ses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Je-ho'-vah my God.

10 And now, behold, Je-ho'-vah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Je-ho'-vah spake this word unto Mo'-ses, while ls'-ra-el walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Mo'ses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in.

12 Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Je-ho'-vah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the An'-a-kim were there, and cities great and fortified: it may be that Je-ho'-vah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Je-ho'-vah spake.

13 And Josh'-u-a blessed him; and

he gave He'-bron unto Ca'-leb the son of Je-phun'-neh for an inheritance.

14 Therefore He'-bron became the inheritance of Ca'-leb the son of Je-phun'-neh the Ken'-iz-zite unto this day; because that he wholly followed Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el.

15 Now the name of He'-bron beforetime was Kir'-i-ath-a-ba; *which Ar'-ba was* the greatest man among the An'-a-kim. And the land had rest from war.

Golden Text.—“I wholly followed Jehovah my God” (Josh. 14: 8.)

Devotional Reading.—Psalms 107: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

September 12. M.....	Caleb's Faith Recognized (Josh. 14: 6-15)
September 13. T.....	Boundaries of Judah (Josh. 15: 1-12)
September 14.....	W. Caleb Takes Possession (Josh. 15:13-20)
September 15. T.....	Strength of Jehovah (Psalm 71: 12-18)
September 16. F.....	Tabernacle Set Up at Shiloh (Josh. 18: 1-7)
September 17. S.....	Joshua's Exhortation to Israel (Josh. 23: 1-11)
September 18. S.....	A Righteous Man's Reward (Psalm 15: 1-5)

Time.—A.M. 2560 or B.C. 1444.

Place.—Gilgal.

Persons.—Joshua and Caleb.

Introduction

There is not much said in the Bible concerning Caleb, but what is recorded is enough to give him a secure place among the immortals of the book of God, and to make him forever an inspiration to those who follow after him. He was a stalwart and honest character, and a man who obeyed God without question. He was never afraid to do his duty, and he never turned his back upon an enemy. He is called “Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite.” This has led some to conclude that he was not a Jew by birth, but a proselyte who was reckoned according to the tribe of Judah.

“But a very interesting question arises as to the birth and parentage of Caleb. He is, as we have seen, styled ‘the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite’ and his younger brother, Othniel, afterwards the first Judge, is also called ‘the son of Kenaz’.” (Josh. 15: 17; Judg. 1: 13; 3: 9, 11.)

“On the other hand the genealogy in 1 Chron. 2 makes no mention whatever of either Jephunneh or Kenaz, but represents Caleb, though obscurely, as being a descendant of

Hezron and a son of Hur. (See 1 Chron. 4.) Again in Josh. 15: 13 we have this singular expression, ‘Unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah;’ and in 14: 14, the no less significant one, ‘Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, because that he wholly followed Jehovah God of Israel.’³ It becomes, therefore, quite possible that Caleb was a foreigner by birth; a proselyte, incorporated into the tribe of Judah, into which perhaps he or his ancestors had married, and one of the first-fruits of that Gentile harvest, of which Jethro, Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, and many others were samples and signs. And this conjecture receives a most striking confirmation from the names of Caleb's family. For on turning to Gen. 36: 11, 15, we find that Kenaz is an Edomitish name, the son of Eliphaz. Again in 1 Chron. 2: 50, 52, among the sons of Caleb the son of Hur we find Shobal and half the Manahathites or sons of Manahath. But in Gen. 36: 20-23, we are told that Shobal was the son of Seir the Horite, and that he was

the father of Manahath." (Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. I, p. 344.)

It should be noted that the difference in the spelling of proper names, such as "Kenezite" and "Kenizzite" which are the same, is due to the different translations.

As has been pointed out before, the children of Israel refused to go into the land of promise when God first led them to it (Deut. 1: 19-26), and it was for that reason that he compelled them to turn back into the wilderness, and wander therein until all the men who were twenty years old and over when they left Egypt had died. Of the six hundred three thousand and five hundred and fifty of that age who came out of Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter Canaan. The wilderness wanderings covered a period of forty years. (Cf. Num. 14: 34.)

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is found in the body of the text, and will be treated in its proper order.

The Text Explained

A Review of the Past

(Josh. 14: 6-9)

Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Jehovah spake unto Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Kadesh-barnea. Gilgal was the first camping place of the people of Israel after they crossed the Jordan; and it was there that lots began to be cast for the territorial assignments which the tribes were to receive. (See Josh. 14: 1-5.) Some portions of Canaan were much more desirable than others, and if the assigning of the land had been done arbitrarily, the result would have been unsatisfactory; for it would have been practically impossible to keep down jealousy and hard-feelings. The assignments therefore were made by lot, in accordance with the customs of that day and the current belief. It appears that the drawing of the lots was not all done at once, as may be seen by reading the closing part of chapter 17 and the first part of chapter 18. The assembly then was in Shiloh, which was "on the north of Bethel, on the

After this long period of wandering was over, the new generation was brought into the land of Canaan. Their entrance, however, was not from the south from which their fathers had been urged to enter thirty-eight years before, but through the plains of Moab and across the Jordan "over against Jericho." Some time was spent in the conquest of the land (Josh. 1-12), and then came the division of the territory. Two and one half tribes were permitted to settle east of the Jordan, while the other nine and one half tribes received their inheritance on the western side of the river. Joseph was not named as the head of a tribe, but his two sons were, which normally would have made thirteen tribes; but Levi had been chosen as the priestly tribe and they were not given a land inheritance, but only cities and their suburbs. (See Josh. 14: 1-5.)

east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." (See Judges 21: 19.) Shiloh had become the meeting place, after the house of God was established there. (See Judges 18: 31.)

There is no specific information regarding the manner in which the lots were drawn, but it appears from Prov. 16: 33 that the plan was acceptable to the Lord. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah." Some Bible students have suggested that there were possibly two urns, one containing the names of the tribes who were to receive the inheritance, and the other containing a description of the various sections of land which were to be distributed; and that from each urn a lot was drawn and the two would indicate both the tribe and the land which it was to receive. In commenting on the practice of drawing lots, C. R. Brown says that the Orientals believe that by this process of chance they eliminated all human judgment and personal will, thereby leaving the matter to the determination of the Unseen One. He further notes that this custom

still persists in that region, as for example, when the road forks and Moslem travelers are uncertain whether to turn to the right or to the left, they sometimes close a fruitless discussion of the probability by saying, "Let us leave it to Allah." Then they cast lots and serenely follow the road which was indicated.

We gather from Num. 13 that Caleb was possibly the head of a family or clan. He and Joshua were selected, along with ten others, to spy out the land after the people had reached Kadesh-barnea; and he reminded Joshua of that which Jehovah spoke regarding them both after they had given a faithful report of their trip through Canaan. Caleb's faith in Jehovah was such as led him to rely upon anything which he said; and it is a noticeable fact that God still requires that kind of confidence in him today. "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.) God is not unrighteous to forget the faithfulness of his servants (Heb. 6: 10); and that was the way Caleb felt about it.

Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. Sometimes people wonder how Bible students determine the chronology of the Scriptures, but if they will note such incidental statements as the one given here, they can see how many of the dates are determined. Caleb gave his age at the time they spied out the land, which was forty years. The people refused to enter the land and were turned back into the wilderness and made to wander thirty-eight more years therein (Deut. 2: 14), until all that generation died, except Joshua and Caleb. This shows that Caleb was seventy-eight years old when they crossed the Jordan into Canaan; and when we consider the fact that he was eighty-five years old at the time of this lesson, it is easy to see that they had been in the land of Canaan approximately seven years.

It is refreshing to note that although forty-five years had passed since the events in Kadesh-barnea, Caleb still honored Moses as the

servant of Jehovah, and the man of God. This is a further insight into the character of this devout co-laborer of Joshua, and there is no wonder therefore when he reminded Joshua that he gave Moses a faithful report. He spoke from deep conviction. He was bold and confident, and spoke that which he believed to be the truth. He made no effort to court the favor of men, and there is no indication that he feared their wrath. It is easy enough for some people to have courage when courage is not needed. The most arrogant coward can qualify in this respect; but it requires real valor for one to stand up and be counted when everything is against him. Such a person, however, should always remember that God is with him when he stands for the truth. (Cf. 2 Tim. 4: 16-18.)

Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Jehovah my God. "My brethren" were the ten spies who gave an evil report. They weakened the spirits of the people of Israel by their portrayal of the giants which they saw in the land, and their exaggerated description of the walled cities. They made the people think that they could not conquer that land. It is, of course, unfortunate that such a spirit did not die with the ten spies in the wilderness; but alas! it is still with us today. The lineal descendants of those men still hold the public ear and do their best to breed panic and distrust wherever adventurous faith is needed. Evil, in their opinion is entrenched in tremendous strength, and it is nothing short of madness to challenge it. Such people do not know the meaning of trust in God. (Cf. Phil. 4: 13; Deut. 33: 25; Heb. 13: 5, 6.)

When Caleb said that he had wholly followed Jehovah he was giving voice to one of the greatest statements any man can make. (Cf. 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.) In commenting on this, James Hastings notes that one of the greatest needs of modern Christian life is the recovery of the sense of obligation to whole-heartedness which seems to be so largely lost. Too many people are satisfied with being party to the merely initial relationships of discipleship. They are content to know Jesus as Saviour in a general

sort of way, and to live a life which has a kind of drift toward him. But there is nothing strenuous about such living; and neither is there any compelling restraint. It is at best haphazard, with no serious purpose or endeavor. Such people may be following Christ, but they are not following him wholly. (Cf. Luke 22: 54ff.)

And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God. Although forty-five years had passed since Moses made that statement, Caleb still claimed the promise. The land referred to was probably Hebron, and it was in all probability mentioned when the promise was made. Caleb had trodden the land by faith, and faith never goes unrewarded. Moses reminded Caleb forty-five years before that his following Jehovah whole-heartedly was the basis of the promise, and when he came to claim the promise he could still say that that was the rule of his life. This is the kind of faith which God can and does always bless.

The Request Which Caleb Made (Josh. 14: 10-12)

And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day four score and five years old. Caleb attributed his long life to Jehovah and his faithfulness in his service. This also shows that the righteous must sometimes patiently wait for their reward. But whether in the wilderness with the wanderers, or helping to conquer the land of promise, Caleb never varied from the path of loyalty to Jehovah.

As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in. Gaius Glenn Atkins notes that life is too likely to fall into two parts: the morning of vision, and an afternoon of disillusionment. Everything seems possible to the young; but too often nothing seems possible to the old. It is a

tragedy when the vision of youth fades into the skeptical conservatism of old age. We begin by believing that the world can be changed; we go on saying that it ought to be changed; we end by saying that it cannot be changed. The glory of old age is to carry out to rich completion that which was best and most promising in our youth. (Cf. Deut. 34: 7.)

Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified: it may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake. This was the vicinity of Hebron and a part of that section which was called the hill-country of Judaea. There is no record containing the promise of Hebron to Caleb, but the statement here is sufficient to show that it was made. Not all the details of the promise were recorded. (Cf. John 20: 30.) The Anakim were a race of giants who inhabited the southern part of Canaan, and they probably lived in Hebron itself. Their presence, of course, would be a great challenge to Caleb; but since he still had the faith which characterized him when he tried to get the people to enter the land from Kadesh-barnea, he was not afraid to attack them when it was time for him to claim God's promise to him, especially if the Lord would be with him.

Caleb's Inheritance (Josh. 14: 13-15)

And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite unto this day; because that he wholly followed Jehovah, the God of Israel. Adam Clarke notes that as the word *bless* often signifies to speak good or well of or to any person, the probable meaning here is that Joshua bestowed his praise upon Caleb's integrity and faithfulness, and requested Jehovah to be with his loyal servant to the end that he might prosper in all things; and especially that the Lord might be with him, as Caleb had expressed in the preceding verse. Hebron was within the territory allotted to the tribe of Judah; and since Caleb was reckoned among

that tribe, his inheritance would be located within their portion.

Now the name of Hebron before-time was Kiriath-arba; which Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war. This verse indicates something of the character of Caleb. He told the Israelites at Kadesh-barnea that they could drive out the enemy, if they would enter the land and trust in Jehovah; and when the time came for him to take possession of his inheritance, he drove out the greatest of the giants. (Cf. Josh. 15: 13, 14.)

The Arabs now call Hebron El Khalil, the Friend of God, a designation for Abraham. It is one of the oldest towns in the world which is still inhabited, instead of being simply a ruin. Hebron is situated in a

valley and on an adjacent slope, 3040 feet above sea level. It is nineteen miles south of Jerusalem. The ancient walls were forty feet high, and well fortified. The houses, which are of stone, are well built, with flat roofs and domed in the middle. The population is about ten thousand, most of them Moslems, with the remainder chiefly Jews. A famous mosque is located within the town which is built around a cave, believed to be that of Machpelah, the burial place of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah. It is said that the cave has not been entered since Crusader times; and it is with difficulty that any Christian gains admission to the building which surrounds it. Arabs descended from Abraham through Ishmael; and they resent the descendants of Isaac.

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

Introduction

What can you say of the historical information regarding Caleb?
Give an appraisal of his character.
What do we know of his nationality? Discuss fully.
Trace the events of Israel's history which led up to this lesson.
How many of the tribes settled in Canaan proper?

A Review of the Past

What was the place of Gilgal in the history of Israel?
Why was the land of Canaan divided among the tribes by lot?
Were all the lots drawn in Gilgal? Give reasons for your answer.
Where was Shiloh? and what was significant about the place?
Why was the distribution of the land by lot an acceptable plan?
Discuss the probable method of casting lots.
What were some of the things which Caleb called to Joshua's attention?
Why was Caleb so reliable in his report to Moses?
How old was he when he was sent to spy out the land?
What is the value of such dates in determining Biblical chronology?
Why did Caleb still honor Moses after he was gone?
Who were the "brethren" about whom Caleb spoke?
Show that the same type of influence still exists today.
What does it mean for one to follow Jehovah *wholly*?
What promise did Moses make to Caleb when he came from spying out the land?
What was the basis for the promise?

Questions for Discussion

The Request Which Caleb Made

How long had it been since the promise was made to Caleb?
To what did he attribute his long life?
What lesson should we learn from this regarding patience?
What did Caleb say regarding his general health and outlook on life?
Into what two parts do many people divide life?
What can the child of God do to correct this viewpoint?
What specific request did Caleb make to Joshua?
Where was Hebron located? and who dwelt there?
Why was Caleb willing to undertake the work of driving the giants out?
How should Christians regard great challenges when God's work is involved?
Give some instances from your personal experience to show how the principle works.

Caleb's Inheritance

In what sense did Joshua bless Caleb?
Why would it be appropriate for Joshua to pray for Caleb?
Why did Caleb claim his inheritance from the land allotted to Judah?
What was the former name of Hebron?
What is the meaning of the term "Arba"?
What is there about this circumstance which reveals something of the greatness of Caleb's character?
What light does this throw upon Caleb's speech when he returned from spying out the land?
What is the present name of Hebron? and why is it so called?
Who are the Arabs? and what is their relation to the Jews?
What is the present condition of the town?
Why do the Moslems not allow Christians to visit the place?
Why do the Arabs resent the descendants of Isaac?

Lesson XIII—September 25, 1960

JOSHUA'S LAST DAYS

Lesson Text

Josh. 24: 14-29

14 Now therefore fear Je-ho'-vah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in E'-gypt; and serve ye Je-ho'-vah.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve Je-ho'-vah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Am'-or-ites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Je-ho'-vah.

16 And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Je-ho'-vah, to serve other gods;

17 For Je-ho'-vah our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of E'-gypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed;

18 And Je-ho'-vah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Am'-or-ites that dwelt in the land: therefore we also will serve Je-ho'-vah; for he is our God.

19 And Josh'-u-a said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Je-ho'-vah; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins.

20 If ye forsake Je-ho'-vah, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people said unto Josh'-u-a, Nay; but we will serve Je-ho'-vah.

22 And Josh'-u-a said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you Je-ho'-vah, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

23 Now therefore put away, *said he*, the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el.

24 And the people said unto Josh'-u-a, Je-ho'-vah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken.

25 So Josh'-u-a made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in She'-chem.

26 And Josh'-u-a wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Je-ho'-vah.

27 And Josh'-u-a said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it hath heard all the words of Je-ho'-vah which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness against you, lest ye deny your God.

28 So Josh'-u-a sent the people away, every man unto his inheritance.

29 And it came to pass after these things, that Josh'-u-a the son of Nun, the servant of Je-ho'-vah, died, being a hundred and ten years old.

Golden Text.—*“Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah”* (Josh. 24: 15.)

Devotional Reading.—Josh. 23: 1-16.

Daily Bible Readings

September 19. M. Joshua Assembles Israel (Josh. 24: 1-13)
 September 20. T. Joshua Renews the Covenant (Josh. 24: 14-25)
 September 21. W. Death of Joshua (Josh. 24: 29-33)
 September 22. T. Choices Must Be Made (Matt. 6: 24-29)
 September 23. F. Faith in Christ (Heb. 13: 8-17)
 September 24. S. Choice of Life or Death (Ezek. 33: 11-16)
 September 25. S. Blessing in Right Choice (Psalm 119: 1-8)

Time.—A.M. 2561 or B.C. 1443.

Place.—Shechem.

Persons.—Joshua and the tribes of Israel.

Introduction

As was noted in an earlier lesson, the Book of Joshua is naturally divided into three parts, namely, (1) the conquest of Canaan; (2) the division of the land among the various tribes; and (3) Joshua's farewell addresses. The lesson for today is taken from the second of these addresses. The years which followed Joshua's work in getting the tribes settled in their inheritances had been years of wisdom. Not all of the inhabitants of the land had been driven out at the time of Joshua's exhortation, but he assured the Israelites that they would be, if they remained faithful to Jehovah. This great warrior-statesman had learned by experience that it was easier to get the enemy out of the way, than it was to get his own people to remain in the path of righteousness.

These two speeches by Joshua should be carefully read before giving attention to the specific lesson which is now before us. The two chapters containing them, chapters 23 and 24, form a pathetic close to a book of battles. Their content is the confession of all true warriors to the effect that it is easier to win a battle than to fight against sin day by day; or, to state the same thing in other words, it is easier to capture the impregnable fort, than to keep the heart pure in God's sight. The first address (chapter 23), was delivered primarily to the leaders of Israel, while the second (24: 1-28), was spoken to all the people.

As already noted, the lesson for today is taken from the second address. Joshua knew the great danger which lay before his people, and he realized that his days were practically over; and so he assembles the people

for one more battle—the hardest one of all. The setting was in Shechem, and his address ranks favorably with that of Moses in the plains of Moab and that of Paul to the Ephesian elders; for in it he, like they, rehearsed the whole plan of God for his people. Joshua expressed the strongest solicitude for what he knew to be the basis for public happiness, namely, the preservation of true religion, and consequently of virtue, in contrast with the superstitious follies and shocking vices of the idolatrous nations about them. He recalled Jehovah's blessings and emphasized Israel's duties; and then, as it were, he gathered up all of his failing strength to remind the chosen people that both their future and salvation depended on their loyalty to the God who was their leader.

No one can read this farewell address without being deeply moved; for its words were the last utterance of a man whose earthly life had almost run its course, and who spoke from the commanding eminence which looks at once upon the clearness of the earthly past and the dimness of the future before them, with the wisdom of aged experience and the awe of approaching death. As Joshua stood before the people, he was to them a monumental relic of the times pushed back, by a stirring century of change, into remote history. He had toiled as a slave in Egypt, had crossed the Red Sea, and had beheld the terrors of Sinai. He knew far more than they thought of their secret idolatrous inclinations; and he would have no half-hearted renunciation. As he saw the matter, they must be for God or against him. (Cf. Matt. 12: 30.)

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson will be treated in the body of the text where it is found.

The Text Explained

The Issue Clearly Stated

(Josh. 24: 14, 15)

Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. To fear Jehovah means to reverence him,

to have the proper regard for him; and then demonstrate that feeling and attitude by sincere and truthful service. One is sincere who is wholeheartedly devoted to God, while truth indicates that what is done in the way of service is according to God's own word and direction. This state-

ment reminds us of one made by Jesus: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4: 24.)

Jehovah has always represented himself as being a jealous God. He will not permit his people to pay homage to any other god. Therefore, if the people to whom Joshua spoke would serve Jehovah in sincerity and in truth, they must put away all foreign gods, whether they be the gods which their fathers served while they lived in Ur of Chaldees, beyond the Euphrates River, or the gods which their more immediate fathers served in Egypt. (Cf. Josh. 24: 2; Gen. 11: 28.) The incident regarding the golden calf (Ex. 32: 1-6), gives some idea of the kind of gods which were served in Egypt. The command to put all false gods away from them, strongly implies that they had a longing for them, if they did not indeed still actually have them.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah. In order to make his plea to the people to serve Jehovah as forceful as possible, Joshua placed before them the alternative of serving the pagan gods of their fathers, which were beyond the River, or those in the land in which they were then dwelling. It would be utterly impossible for them to serve both Jehovah and the false deities at the same time; and it was for this reason that a choice was inevitable. Joshua well knew that all service, if it was to be acceptable to God, would have to be free and voluntary; and he therefore called upon the people to make their own choice.

There are three things in Joshua's plea to the people of Israel which should be emphasized here. (1) *A choice had to be made, and, what is more significant to us, the force of that appeal can never be spent.* It is still ringing in every man's ears today, and it brings hope to everyone who does not want to be a slave to the evil one. God is always ready to bless those who choose him. (2) *The time of the choice.* The exhortation is, "Choose ye *this day* whom ye will

serve." This exhortation is essential; for it is certain that time has a bearing on the limitations which affect our ability to choose. "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." (Isa. 55: 6.)

It is a well known fact that the passing of time closes some doors to free choice. When a young man, for example, graduates from college he may experience difficulty in choosing from among several different lines of activity which are open to him; but after twenty or thirty years have passed, he would not be free to choose some of the professions in which he could have succeeded, had he made his choice earlier. The same principle holds true in the spiritual life; and so, "To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (See Heb. 4: 7.) (3) *The object of the choice.* The noblest choice which any responsible person can make is that of service to God. Jesus said, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 33.) And again, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matt. 16: 26.)

Joshua did not merely exhort the people whom he had led into Canaan to make a choice for themselves; he led the way by declaring that so far as he and his house were concerned, they would serve Jehovah. Joshua in the presence of the assembly of Israel, as Jesus did later in the presence of Pilate, "witnessed the good confession." (See 1 Tim. 6: 13.) His was not to be the religion of the nation or the religion of his brethren. All might reject God, but he and his house would cling to Jehovah. It is refreshing to note that Joshua was found among the number of heads of houses who succeeded in leading them to a devout faith in God, and in a service which was loyal to him. (Cf. Gen. 18: 19; Acts 10: 1, 2.)

The People's Response (Josh. 24: 16-18)

And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; for Jehovah our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of

the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed; and Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites that dwelt in the land; therefore we also will serve Jehovah; for he is our God.

This was a noble confession, and it plainly showed that the Israelites had a clear understanding as to why they should devote themselves to God. This should be a powerful lesson to us; for there is not a good thing which comes to us today, but from God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1: 17.) Not only does God supply every temporal blessing that we need; he also made possible, with the sacrifice of his Son, our salvation from sin. (Read carefully John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8.)

We gather from the words of the sacred historian near the close of the chapter that the people were sincere when they made the foregoing statement to Joshua. "And Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and had known all the work of Jehovah, that he had wrought for Israel." (Josh. 24: 31.) This was a wonderful tribute to the influence of Joshua. The words which the people spoke to him at that time were a practical repetition of the address which he had just delivered to them. He had told them why they should serve Jehovah, and they responded by citing the reasons for their determination to be loyal to him in the words which he had just spoken.

But one has only to read the Book of Judges to see what the Israelites did later on. Their idolatry grew from bad to worse, until it was finally halted and completely cured during their bondage in Babylon. In showing something of the fickleness of human nature, Adam Clarke quotes Mr. Trapp as saying, "It is ordinary for the many-headed multitude to turn with the stream—to be of the same religion with their superiors: thus at Rome, in Diocletian's time,

they were pagans; in Constantine's Christians; in Constantius', Arians; in Julian's, apostates; and in Jovinian's, Christians again! And all this within less than the age of a man. It is, therefore, a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

The Covenant Renewed (Josh. 24: 19-29)

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil and consume you, after that he hath done you good. It is obvious to any thoughtful person that the rendering here is not clear; for taken as it is, Joshua was discouraging an imperfect people from trying to serve a holy God. The "if" of his second statement was evidently intended to show his meaning, namely, "Ye cannot serve Jehovah, IF ye serve foreign gods." Adam Clarke, after pointing out the need for clarification, renders the passage in these words: "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is holy and jealous, unless ye put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the flood. For he is a jealous God, and will not give to nor divide his glory with any other. He is a holy God, and will not have his people defiled with the impure worship of the Gentiles."

And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve Jehovah. This shows that the people did not understand Joshua to say that it was impossible for them to serve Jehovah. Their future record, already quoted, shows that they did serve him; and if they had remained close to him and sought his gracious help, they would have continued in his favor. God is always a ready help to all who call upon him.

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you Jehovah, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. The entire purpose of Joshua's address to the people was to induce them to give loyal service unto Jehovah, and now he reminds them that they have been fully informed as to what was involved in such service. The way was difficult, God is holy and jealous, and man is weak

at best. They would need Divine help, which would always be available; but if they should attempt to divide their allegiance, or transfer it altogether, the consequences of such apostasy would certainly come upon them. All of this they understood, and were assuming full responsibility for the choice they had made. The manner in which Naomi dealt with her two daughters-in-law when they started to follow her to Bethlehem, and the results which followed, will help to understand the principle involved in the text now before us. (See Ruth 1: 6-18.)

Now therefore put away, said he, the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken. Joshua then called upon the people to give some visible evidence of their sincerity in promising to serve Jehovah. Their pledge of loyalty had been given, and now the only way to fulfil it was by immediate action. It is a principle capable of demonstration that a man's promise to serve the Lord will soon lose its moral hold on his conscience, if he does not immediately begin to carry out the terms of his pledge. This was the plan followed by the early Christians, as may be seen by reading Acts 2: 42ff; and this is a lesson which all professed followers of Christ should always keep before them. Immediate and continuous service in the Lord's vineyard will always insure a continuation in his favor.

So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Jehovah. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it hath heard all the words of Jehovah which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness against you, lest ye deny your God. After having led the people to a public commitment to God, Joshua had the matter properly attested and recorded "in the

book of the law of God," probably, as Clarke notes, in some part of the skin constituting the great roll, on which the laws of God were written, and of which there were some blank columns to spare. The stone would be a permanent witness. In saying that the stone had heard all the words of Jehovah which he spake unto us, Joshua was using a well known figure of speech, that of ascribing personality to inanimate objects. (Cf. the blood of Abel, Gen. 4: 10; the morning stars, Job 38: 7; the land and the furrows, Job 31: 38; the heavens, etc., Psalm 19: 1-6; building materials, Hab. 2: 11; stones, Luke 19: 40; and the hire of defrauding laborers, James 5: 4.)

So Joshua sent the people away, every man unto his inheritance. This, apparently, was the last public act of Joshua.

And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being a hundred and ten years old. Some one has pointed out the fact that there is no character that is brought to our attention with such detail in the Divine Record, and about which there are so few blemishes recorded, as that of Joshua. He stands out from the pages of the Bible as a great soldier, to whom great causes were committed, and by whom great things were done. He not only possessed the valour of a warrior, but also the justice, gentleness, forbearance, humility, and disinterestedness of an exemplary ruler, leading his people to victory, and then giving to each his inheritance. And then, having done that, he was able to keep the people in faithful service to Jehovah. In the words of F. B. Meyer, Joshua was strong and wise and true to the great trust committed to his care by the people and by God; and amid the stars that shine in the firmament of heaven, not the least bright and clear is the lustre of Joshua, the son of Nun, who was the antetype of the risen and ascended Saviour, and whose worthiest epitaph, as written by a subsequent hand, is—

JOSHUA,
The Son of Nun,
The Servant of Jehovah

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Under what circumstances were the words of the text spoken?
Give a brief resume of the work of Joshua.
What was his greatest task? Why?
Compare the farewell speeches of Joshua with those of Moses and Paul.
Why did Joshua have such great influence with his people?

The Issue Clearly Stated

What was the issue which Joshua placed before the Israelites?
What does it mean to fear Jehovah, and to serve him in sincerity and in truth?
What idolatry had characterized their fathers?
How did Joshua seek to reinforce his plea to the people?
Why did he place an alternative before them?
What are the three things in Joshua's plea which should be emphasized?
Why is such a choice inevitable?
How does the time element affect choice-making?
What is the wisest and noblest choice anyone can make? Give reasons for your answer.
What did Joshua say about himself and his house?

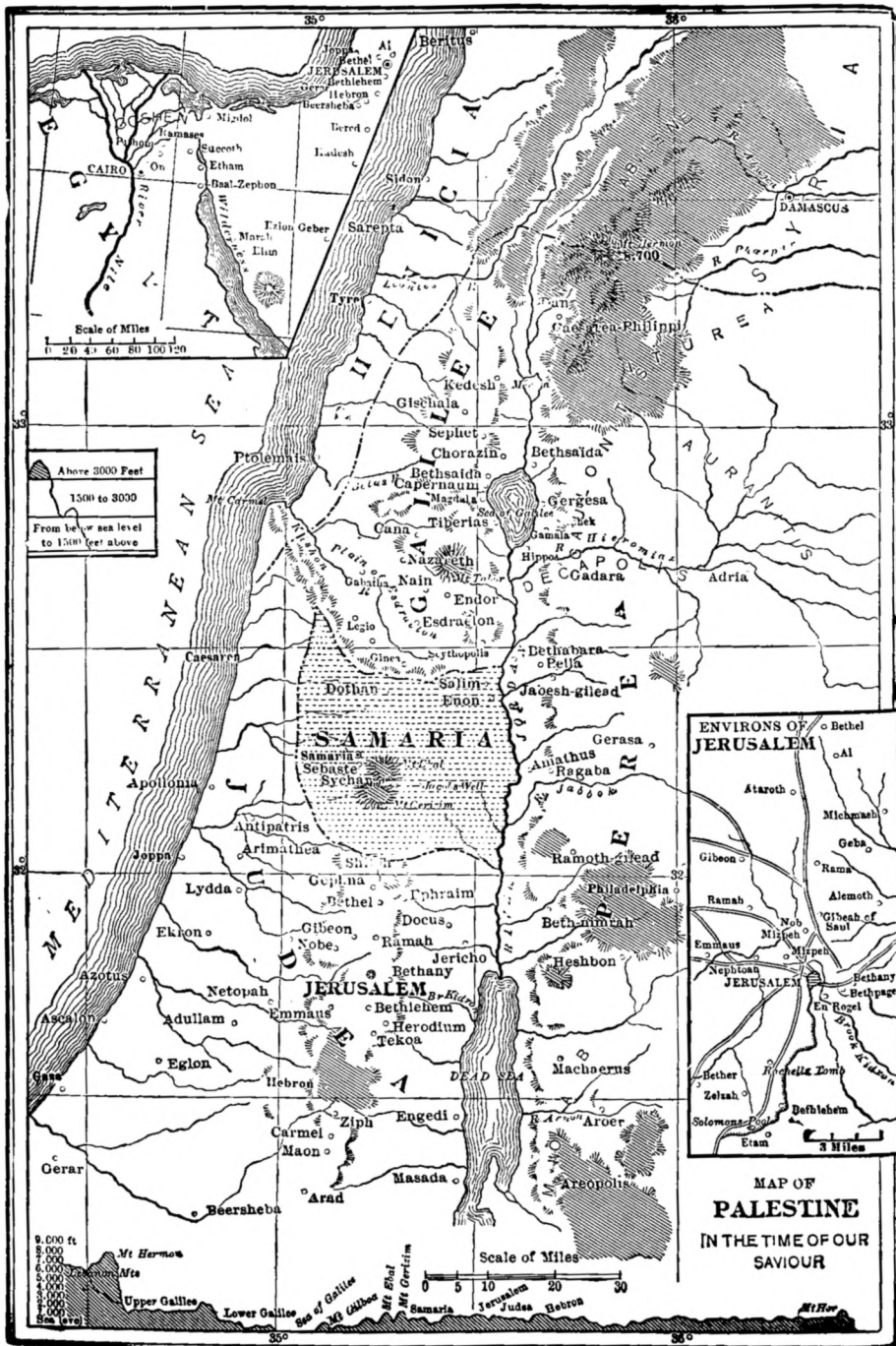
What does this show about the character of Joshua?

The People's Response

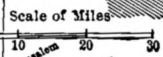
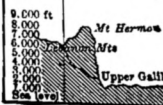
What did the reply of the people show?
What reason do we have for thinking that they were sincere?
What indicates the impression which Joshua's speech made upon them?
Why did the people later fall into idolatry?

The Covenant Renewed

Why did Joshua tell the people that they could not serve Jehovah?
What reply did they make?
In what sense is Jehovah a jealous God?
In what way did the people witness against themselves?
What was the value in bringing the people to make their own determined choice?
How may the same principle be applied to us?
What visible evidence did Joshua call upon the people to give?
Why is immediate action always so essential?
In what sense did Joshua make a covenant with the people that day?
How was it attested and recorded?
In what sense did the stone hear the words of Jehovah?
What was apparently Joshua's last public act?
Give a summary of his character.



MAP OF PALESTINE
IN THE TIME OF OUR SAVIOUR



Upper Galilee Lower Galilee Sea of Galilee Mt. Hermon Mt. Gerizim Samaria Jerusalem Judaea Beersheba

FOURTH QUARTER

STUDIES IN JOHN

AIM.—To enable us all to enter into a deeper sympathy with, and to acquire a wider knowledge of, the Son of God who, as the Word, inhabits eternity; but was made flesh and dwelt among men that he might some day take us to live with God.

Lesson I—October 2, 1960

CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT

Lesson Text

John 1: 1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.

8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light.

9 There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13 Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

Golden Text.—“*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*” (John 14: 9.)
Devotional Reading.—1 John 1: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

September 26. M.....	Jesus the Word (John 1: 1-9)
September 27. T.....	Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-20)
September 28. W.....	Testimony of John (John 1: 15-18)
September 29. T.....	Jesus' Humanity (Deut. 18: 15-19)
September 30. F.....	Birth of a Virgin (Isa. 7: 1-11)
October 1. S.....	Purpose of Christ's Coming (Heb. 2: 9-18)
October 2. S.....	Jesus Humbled Himself (Phil. 2: 5-11)

Time.—Of writing, near the close of the first century, A.D.; of events, from the beginning to the incarnation.

Places.—Of writing, Ephesus; of events, Eternity and Judaea.

Persons.—John the writer; Jesus the subject.

Introduction

It is hoped that the users of this commentary will keep the facts of time, place, and persons, as given above, in mind; for during our study of the gospel record we shall refer only to the time, place, and persons of a given lesson.

Many Bible students refer to the Gospel of John as the Fourth Gospel, since its plan and purpose are different from the other three, which are known as the Synoptic Gospels. The term “synoptic” literally means a similar view, and when applied to

the gospel records, the meaning is that the three evangelists treated the life and character of Jesus from a similar viewpoint. In speaking of John's record of the gospel, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* says, "This famous book has a unique quality: historical fact is blended in it with religious interpretation, vivid dramatic narrative, and profound theology, all fused into a literary unity. This difference from the other three, or Synoptic Gospels, was early recognized." A quotation from Clement of Alexandria then follows, in which he says, "Last of all John, perceiving that the bodily literal facts had been set forth in the other gospels, with the inspiration of the Spirit composed a spiritual Gospel."

The purpose that John had in writing his record of the gospel is plainly stated in his own language: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." (John 20: 30, 31.) This implies that it was faith rather than fact which prompted John to write; or, to say the same thing in other words, John's concern with historical events was not for their sake alone, but for their use in awakening

faith. This purpose, to be sure, is present to some extent in all the gospel records, but in John's it is more consciously and creatively present than in the others. This fact explains John's choice of representative material (much of which differs from the Synoptists), and his unique method. Referring again to *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, we read,

"The *method* of this Gospel is not that of a historical record, but of a drama whose successive scenes reveal Christ's glory. Though it is built on a foundation of history, its superstructure is concerned with spiritual truth. To develop this the author chooses typical miracles, and unfolds their meaning by elaborate discourses. At the heart of these dramatic discourses are brief, vivid sayings which are authentic sayings of Jesus: e.g., 'I am the light of the world' (8: 12); 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink' (7: 37). The discourses are not verbatim records, but a development of the central teaching in a manner like that used by Plato in writing the speeches of Socrates. Ignatius said: 'He that truly possesseth the word of Jesus is able to hearken unto his silence.' By the inspiration of the Spirit (14: 26), John fills the silence of Jesus and interprets him to a later age." (Cf. John 16: 13.)

The Golden Text

"*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*" These words are taken from the farewell discourse of Jesus to his disciples, and they were spoken in reply to Philip's request that Jesus show them the Father. In view of his death and the tragic events which would immediately precede it, Jesus sums up the meaning of his life and ministry, and explains that his departure to the Father is really for the benefit of his disciples. It will not mean complete separation; for they will continue to enjoy the divine presence, though in a different manner. Head John, chapters 14-16. Our golden text for today can best be understood in the light of its full context.

"Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place

for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" (John 14: 1-9.)

Philip, in making this request, made the same mistake which Thomas had

just made: both asked for physical instead of spiritual revelations. But God is a Spirit (John 4: 24), and cannot be revealed to the physical senses. Jesus was sent to the earth to reveal God to man. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1: 18.) To see Jesus there-

fore is to see the Father; because the Father is in him and is the One who works through him. (Cf. John 3: 1, 2.) A physical revelation of God, if such were possible, would have been of little or no benefit to the apostles; for, as has been noted, all the physical demonstrations at Mount Sinai did not keep the Israelites from making and worshipping the golden calf.

The Text Explained

The Word's Relation to God and the Universe

(John 1: 1-5)

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. The first eighteen verses of John 1 are usually referred to as the Prologue, in which, as Alford notes, is contained the substance and subject of the whole Gospel. Vincent quotes Godet as saying the Prologue is summed up in three thoughts, which also determine its plan: The *LOGOS*: the *Logos* disowned; and the *Logos* acknowledged and regained. These three fundamental aspects correspond with the three principal aspects of the history as related in this gospel: the revelation of the *Logos*; the unbelief of the Jewish people; and the faith of the disciples. "*Logos*" is the Greek for *Word*.

Each of the four gospel writers had a beginning point for his narrative. Matthew began with the genealogy of Jesus and the virgin birth; Luke with the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; Mark, with the work of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus; but John went back, as it were, into Eternity itself. John wrote after the others did, and it is obvious that he had a different purpose in mind. John omitted many of the events which the others recorded, and dealt more with the spiritual aspect of Jesus and his ministry. His apparent reason for this was to combat the errors of the Gnostics who denied much of the basic teaching regarding Christ and the divine revelation.

The "beginning" to which John referred was the beginning which antedated the creation of Gen. 1: 1. The *beginning* of Gen. 1: 1 refers to the beginning of the created universe; not to the beginning of God. The

expression, as used by John, is equivalent to saying that the Word had a being before the world existed. "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17: 5.) The "beginning" of John 1: 1 therefore denotes absolute pre-existence, insofar as the universe is concerned. (Cf. John 8: 58, Ex. 3: 13, 14.) It appears that the term "was" is used in contrast with "was made" and "became" in verses 3 and 14.

It is difficult for finite minds to grasp the idea of the nature and being of the Infinite. It may help us some if we try to think of God as a Being with a spirit and the means and power to express his will, just as we think of man with a spirit and the ability to communicate his mind or will to others. When we think of man as a being with a spirit and the power to communicate, we do not think of three independent persons, but of one being with different manifestations. And just so with God—he has a spirit just as man has a spirit. God's spirit is called the Holy Spirit, and it is his very life principle and the power by which he performs his diverse activities. It is, of course, utterly impossible to separate God's spirit from himself.

In a similar manner, God's medium of communicating his will is called the Word, and it is likewise impossible to separate God's word from himself. This is what John means when he says that the Word was in the beginning with God. It is only on this basis that Christ could be in heaven and on the earth at the same time. (Cf. John 3: 13.) In saying that the Word was God, John means that the Word was of the same nature as God. In working out the scheme of human redemption, God revealed himself as a triune Being, that is, three Persons

in One. This was possible because both his spirit and his word were personified, that is, regarded as distinct persons. This is what Paul means by the Godhead. (See Acts 17: 29; Col. 2: 9.) This also accounts for the plural in such passages as Gen. 1: 26; 3: 22; 11: 7. God is essentially One, with a spirit and a medium of communicating his will; but in revelation it is God, his spirit (the Holy Spirit), and his word (later known as his Son). (Cf. Rev. 19: 13.)

All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In speaking of the creation in the abstract, inspired writers attributed it to the word or commandment of God, and the term is spelled with a small letter at the beginning, "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." (See Psalm 33: 6, 9.) "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear." (Heb. 11: 3.) God's word was his method and means of creation, but when that word was personified, that is, regarded as a person, it is spelled with a capital "W"; and when the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, the creation was attributed to him as the Son of God. (Cf. John 1: 10; 1 Cor. 8: 6; Col. 1: 16, 17; Heb. 1: 2.)

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. The Word was both the source of life and that which enlightened and sustained men in this world. (Cf. John 8: 12.) The light of God's Son shines in the darkness; and the darkness has never been able to overcome it. (See marginal reading.) Goodspeed renders the passage in these words: "It was by him that life came into existence, and that life was the light of mankind. The light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out."

The Word's Relation to John (John 1: 6-8)

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the

light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. It is in this section of the Prologue that John for the first time reaches the realm of history in his narrative. Hitherto he has been concerned with that which was in the beginning. There are two interesting things to note in his reference to John namely, his divine mission and the fact that he calls him simply John. That John was sent from God is a matter both of history and prophecy, as may be seen by reading such passages as Mark 1: 2-4; Mal. 3: 1; John 1: 31-34. The probable reason why the writer of the Fourth Gospel never refers to John as John the Baptist was due to the fact that his own name was the same, and he therefore wrote as if the Baptist was the only John entitled to distinction.

After introducing the subject of his gospel as the eternal Word of God, John, like Mark, begins his historical narrative with the work of the Baptist; and he clearly shows why God sent the forerunner: his work was that of a witness. Vincent points out the fact that the emphatic development of the idea of witness is peculiar to John's gospel, and he quotes Westcott as saying that it evidently belongs to a time when men had begun to reason about the faith, and to analyze the grounds on which it rested. The prominence of the idea of witnessing in the gospel now before us may be seen by reading the following passages: (1) The witness of the Father, 5: 37; 8: 18; (2) the witness of Christ himself, 8: 14; 18: 37; (3) the witness of works, 5: 36; 10: 25; (4) the witness of scripture, 5: 39, 46; 1: 45; (5) the witness of the harbinger, 1: 7; 5: 33; (6) the witness of the disciples, 15: 27; 19: 35; 21: 24; and (7) the witness of the Spirit, 15: 26; 16: 13, 14. (Cf. 1 John 5: 7.)

The Word's Relation to Mankind (John 1: 9-14)

There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. This was spoken in contrast with John who, himself, was also a light, but not the true light. (See John 5: 33-35.) It appears that "coming into the world" refers to the light, rather than to every man. (See John 12: 46.) The true light existed from the beginning.

but it was *coming* into the world during the ministry of John.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. John had just said that the light (i.e., the Word), was coming into the world, but he hastens to add that he was already in the world, that the world was made by him, but that it did not recognize him. His coming, of course, was his incarnation or revelation.

He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. The first "his own" is neuter and means his own things (see margin), while the second "his own" is masculine and refers to his own people. John, at this point, passes from the general to the specific action of the Word as the light.

But to as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The reference here is primarily to the Jewish people, but the principle is applicable to all people throughout the present age. To "receive" Christ is to *believe* on him, that is, to accept the testimony concerning him. But the people who believe are not his people, merely as a result of their faith; they have the *right* to be-

come or the *privilege* of becoming, children of God. Paul told the Romans that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes it; and then he told them that God's righteousness, or that which he expects of them, is revealed in the gospel. (See Rom. 1: 16, 17.) The Jews took pride in the fact that they were born children of Abraham, and therefore children of God, but Jesus makes it plain that fleshly relationships do not count with him. He later taught Nicodemus that a new birth is necessary. (See John 3: 1-5; cf. Acts 2: 36-41.)

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. One of the chief dogmas of the heretical Gnostics of John's day was the denial that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (see 2 John 7). They admitted that Jesus did, but denied that he was the Christ, holding that the Christ descended on Jesus at his baptism, and left him at the cross. But John declares that it was the Word which became flesh, and lived among us. (Cf. 1 John 1: 1-3.) In doing this he did not give up his divine nature, but took upon himself the nature of humanity—he was both God and man. (See Phil. 2: 5-8.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the general aim of the studies in this quarter?
 What is the subject of this lesson?
 Repeat the golden text.
 Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Why is John's record frequently called the "Fourth Gospel"?
 Why are the other three called the Synoptic Gospels?
 Why was it necessary for John to write in a different manner from the other three?
 What was the chief purpose of John in writing?
 Discuss the method which John employed in writing his narrative.
 Was John inspired? Give reasons for your answer.

The Golden Text

Discuss the setting of the golden text.
 Why is it true that when one sees the Son he also sees the Father?
 What mistake did Philip make in asking Jesus to show them the Father?

The Word's Relation to God and the Universe

What is the relation of John 1: 1-18 to the remainder of the record?
 Give a brief analysis of the Prologue.
 At what point did each of the four gospel writers begin his narrative?

Why did John go back to the beginning? and what beginning?
 By what term was the subject of John's gospel first known?
 In what sense was Jesus the Word of God?
 In what sense is God a triune Being?
 Discuss the general relation of the members of the Godhead.
 What did John mean by saying that the Word was God?
 Why is it impossible to separate God from his spirit and his word?
 Why are the Spirit and Word of God, as members of the Godhead, spelled with capital letters?
 In speaking of creation in the abstract, to what is it ascribed?
 How, then, was it later ascribed to Christ?
 In what sense was life in the Word?
 What did that life become to men? and with what result?

The Word's Relation to John

Who was the man sent from God? and what was his mission?
 Why did the writer speak of him simply as "John," rather than John the Baptist?
 In what way did John bear witness of the light?
 Discuss the emphasis which John's gospel places on witnessing.

The Word's Relation to Mankind

Why was the Word called the "true light"?

In what sense was that light "coming into the world"?
 To what did the Word come? and how was he received?
 Why didn't the world recognize him?
 What is said of those who did receive him?
 What does it mean to "receive" Christ?

Give reasons for your answer.
 What is meant by saying that the believer has the right to become a child of God?
 What does it mean to be born of God?
 Why did John say that the Word became flesh, and dwell among us?
 In what sense did the Word become flesh?

Lesson II—October 9, 1960

THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Lesson Text

John Is 35-46

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

36 And he looked upon Je'-sus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'-sus.

38 And Je'-sus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rab'-bi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou?

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

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

41 He findeth first his own brother

Si'-mon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mes-si'-ah (which is, being interpreted, Christ).

42 He brought him unto Je'-sus. Je'-sus looked upon him and said, Thou art Si'-mon the son of John: thou shalt be called Ce'-phas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Gal'-i-lee, and he findeth Philip: and Je'-sus said unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was from Beth-sa'-i-da, of the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Na-than'-a-el, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Mo'-ses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Je'-sus of Naz'-a-reth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Na-than'-a-el said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Naz'-a-reth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Golden Text.—"Jesus saith unto him, Follow me." (John 1: 43.)

Devotional Heading.—Prov. 3: 13-18.

Daily Bible Readings

- October 3. M..... Pointing Men to Jesus (John 1: 35-42)
- October 4. T..... John's Introduction to Jesus (John 1: 29-34)
- October 5. W..... Requirements of Discipleship (Luke 8: 34-38)
- October 6. T..... Following Christ (John 10: 11-18)
- October 7. F..... Test of Discipleship (Matt. 10: 32-39)
- October 8. S..... Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14: 25-35)
- October 9. S..... The Great Shepherd (Heb. 13: 16-21)

Time.—A.D. 27.

Place.—Bethany beyond the Jordan.

Persons.—Jesus, John the Baptist, and five disciples.

Introduction

The two paragraphs, verses 19-34, which precede our text for today should be read before beginning the study of this lesson. These paragraphs tell of the testimony which John bore to Jesus, when he was questioned by a delegation from the Pharisees in Jerusalem. (See verses

19, 24.) The term "Jews," as used by John here, refers to the ruling class among the Jewish people, in this case, as already noted, the Pharisees. John's work as the forerunner of Christ had stirred up great interest among the people of Palestine, and it was but natural for the leaders to

make some effort to learn something about him. The unfortunate thing about the matter was their motive. Their whole history during the life of Christ here among men shows that their efforts along these lines were not made in the interest of truth and righteousness.

The term "disciple" is an interesting word. It literally means a learner, student, or follower of a teacher or leader. Jesus had many disciples while he was upon the earth, and it was from them that he chose the twelve apostles. (See Luke 6: 13.) Other leaders and teachers also had disciples. In speaking to the man who had been born blind, but whose eyes Jesus opened, the Pharisees said, "Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses." (See John 9: 28.) The Pharisees and John the Baptist had their disciples (Mark 2: 18; Luke 5: 33), and it was, in fact, from John's disciple that Jesus got his first followers, as we shall see in this lesson.

When Christ gave the great commission to his disciples just before he ascended back to his Father, 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, 20.) This shows that disciples are made before they are baptized, that is, they become learners of Jesus before they obey him. It is, indeed, impossible for anyone to obey a leader until he first learn what he wants 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; cf. Mark 16: 15, 16.)

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is in the body of the text, and it will be considered in its proper order.

The Text Explained

John, His Disciples, and Jesus (John 1: 35-39)

Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! We can see from the two preceding paragraphs that the events of this verse took place on the day following John's testimony regarding Christ, and on the second day after his talk with the delegation from Jerusalem. On the day before the happenings of today's lesson, John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" and now he repeats a part of that statement to two of his disciples. Jesus is the great antitype of the sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament which died, innocently and patiently, for the sins of the people. (Cf. Isa. 53: 7; 1 Pet. 1: 19.)

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. John's audience on this occasion was small, so far as the record goes, but both men were so impressed with his

testimony that they followed Jesus. John's mission was to bear testimony to Jesus, and not to be merely a friend or a familiar acquaintance. John himself said to some of his own disciples, "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3: 28-30.) It was for this reason that John never felt slighted or forsaken when his disciples left him in order to follow Jesus.

And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher) where abidest thou? These are the first words of Jesus which John recorded. (Cf. Matt. 3: 15; Mark 1: 15; Luke 2: 49.) Jesus did not ask this question in order to obtain information from the two, but

probably to give them an opportunity to talk with him. They would naturally be somewhat timid in the presence of one so great as John had represented Jesus as being, and especially since they did not know him. Jesus, of course, understood this, and his aim was to make it easier for them to enter into conversation with him. This is a lesson which many preachers and church leaders today should learn. They should endeavor to make it easy for those who are seeking more information regarding the truth to approach them; and then, in keeping with the example of Jesus, they should be willing to give assistance to all who are looking to them for guidance and help in the great work of their salvation.

The term "Rabbi" literally means the great one, or as we might say, "My great one," or "my honorable sir." (See Vincent, in *loco.*) Both Jesus and John explain the term to mean "teacher." (See Matt. 23: 8.) The fact that John interprets the meaning strongly indicates that he was writing for Gentiles as well as for Jews. The title was widely used by the Jewish people in addressing their religious teachers. The principle set forth by Jesus in Matt. 23: 8-10 against the use of such titles among his followers is the reason why it is wrong for gospel preachers to desire that they be addressed as Reverend So and So.

He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour. This was the Lord's invitation to the two disciples to go with him to his abiding place, which in all probability was the home of some friend. The permanent home of Jesus was still in Nazareth. While it seems quite likely that John employs Roman time in a part of his narrative, it appears that the time mentioned here was Jewish time, that is, four o'clock in the afternoon. The Jews began their day at six o'clock in the morning, while the Romans, like we do, began theirs at midnight. We do not know just how long the disciples remained with Jesus, whether for a few hours or all night; but from what happened the next day, it is fair to conclude that the experience was wonderful. They were completely convinced that they

had found the Messiah, and they were ready to begin bringing their brethren and friends to him.

Simon Is Introduced to Jesus (John 1: 40-42)

One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. The other disciple, that is, the one who went with Andrew to see Jesus, was probably John. He never mentions his own name, but his narrative is so minute as to leave little doubt about its being written by a firsthand witness. The fact that Simon Peter's name is mentioned before he appears in the narrative indicates something of the importance which John attached to him. He seems to have assumed a knowledge of him on the part of the readers, or at least, he refers to him in such a way as to show that he was an unusual character.

He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). Some Bible students profess to see in the expression "He findeth first" the implication that John also found his brother, while others think that the idea is that the first thing which Andrew did after his visit with Jesus was to find his own brother. The term "Messiah" is explained to mean *Christ*, that is, Anointed. Messiah is Hebrew, Christ is Greek, while Anointed is English. All three words mean one and the same thing, and the idea which they set forth was based on the ancient Hebrew custom of anointing a person who was being set apart for high office, especially a priest or a ruler. (Cf. Acts 4: 26, 27; 10: 38; Heb. 1: 8, 9.) The word "Messiah" is found only twice in the New Testament, here and in John 4: 25. (See the marginal reading of 1 Cor. 1: 23.)

He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter). If this was the first time that Peter had met Jesus, which probably was, the words which the Lord spoke to him must have made a deep impression upon him. It was as if Christ said unto him, "So you are Simon, you shall be called Peter." The future tense indicates that Simon would win the right to the new

name. Temperamental and impulsive as he was then, he would in time become as stable as a rock.

There are many people who habitually wish that they were better than they are. Possessing a bad temper, they want a good one; timid, they want courage; or being sensual, they want emotional peace. As they consider the situation, they often wonder where such things may be obtained. Such a view, however, is very erroneous, for no one can put such qualities into us from the outside. They are indeed necessary, if we are to live and enjoy the better life; but they are already in us, imprisoned and undeveloped, like seed which have never been watered and so have never grown. It follows therefore that people should stop trying to be somebody else, or trying to import into themselves virtues from without. They must be themselves, perhaps not as they now are, but themselves as they are capable of becoming. (Cf. John 10: 10.) The highway of life is littered with human wreckage of people who tried desperately to be somebody else!

The marginal reading of "Peter" is *Rock* or *Stone*, and the meaning is a detached fragment of the ledge. Jesus himself makes this distinction in Matt. 16: 18 when he refers to Peter as "*Petros*" (a stone or detached rock), and to the foundation upon which he would build the church as "*petra*" (a massive ledge). *Petros* is masculine, while *petra* is feminine. Cephas is Hebrew, Peter is Greek, while stone or rock is English. One has only to read of Peter's life after Pentecost to see that he lived up fully to the prediction which Jesus made of him. (Cf. John 21: 15-19.)

Philip and Nathanael (John 1: 43-46)

On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. It should be kept in mind that Jesus was in or near "Bethany beyond the Jordan," that is, east of the Jordan, when he called his first disciples. The location of this Bethany is not certainly known today, but from the fact that Jesus and his disciples could get from there to Cana

of Galilee on foot by "the third day" suggests that it was not too far away from that place. If that Bethany was the same as Bethabara, as some think, then it was located across the Jordan from the lower end of Galilee, that area of Palestine west of the sea by the same name and which was ruled during the time of Christ by Herod Antipas. (See Luke 3: 1.) Galilee was separated from Judaea by Samaria. (See map.) Bethsaida, the home of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, was near Capernaum, possibly a suburb. Jesus makes a reference to Bethsaida in Matt. 11: 21. Philip was the first of the disciples who received a direct request from the Lord to follow him.

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. We learn from John 21: 2 that Nathanael's home was in Cana of Galilee, and the two passages (1: 45ff and 21: 2), contain the only mention of his name in the New Testament. This is all the positive knowledge we have of him, but there are some ideas regarding him which are interesting, and which may be true. For example, many Bible students have long considered Nathanael as being identical with Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles of Christ. The reasons usually given for this view at least bring it within the realm of probability. (1) Both passages which mention Nathanael list him with the apostles of Jesus.

(2) In the list of the apostles given in the Synoptic Gospels, Bartholomew is always placed immediately after Philip. Matthew and Luke couple him with Philip in precisely the same manner that Andrew is coupled with Peter, and John with James. (3) Although Nathanael is never mentioned by the Synoptists, Bartholomew is not mentioned by John. It is altogether probable therefore that the two names belonged to the same man, Bartholomew being the surname, while Nathanael was his proper or given name.

Both Moses and the prophets wrote of the coming Messiah, and the pious Jews of the period we are now considering were expecting his appearance. (Cf. Deut. 18: 15-19.) The coming of Christ was the burden of

many of the Old Testament prophets.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

There is a popular idea among religious people that Nazareth was a despised city, and that Nathanael's question therefore was full of scorn. But Vincent, Alford, and other eminent Bible students tell us that there is no basis for the view that Nazareth was any worse than other places in that area, beyond the fact that violence was offered to Jesus by its citizens (Luke 4: 28, 29), and their obstinate unbelief in him (Matt. 13: 58; Mark 6: 6). In the view of Alford, Nathanael's remark concerning Nazareth alluded to the smallness and insignificance of the town in comparison with the great things which were now ascribed to it by the intimation that the Messiah lived there! Alford further notes that Nazareth is never mentioned in either the Old Testament or Josephus. If this be true, then Nathanael's viewpoint was similar to that of the Wise-men who apparently thought that Jesus would be born in the capital city of the Jewish people.

Philip's contact with Nathanael calls to our attention two interesting and striking things, namely, Nathanael's prejudice, and Philip's reply. Someone has noted that prejudice is a great time-saver. It enables one to form opinions without getting the facts in the case. John Wesley points out that when prejudice once gets hold of an honest heart, such as Nathanael had, it leads him to suspect that Jesus is an imposter because he was brought up in Nazareth! This can be extended to include any of us; for prejudice allows its possessor to form incorrect judgments and hasty

conclusions, and thereby reject the truth, if he is not very careful. Nathanael's attitude of mind at first could easily have led to his rejecting Christ, but it is refreshing to know, as may be seen by reading the rest of the story, that his character came to his rescue and overcame his prejudice.

Philip evidently had some knowledge of the workings of human nature for it will have to be admitted by every thoughtful person that he met Nathanael's prejudice very wisely. He did not argue with him; he simply said, "Come and see." There is no better way today to meet prejudice than to invite one to come and see; and that method, in turn, will soon show the objector whether or not he is really sincere at heart. The case now before us shows that not every person who does not see things as we think he should is dishonest. There are many honest people who misunderstand "our position" on many questions because it has been misrepresented to them; and in some instances those who did the misrepresenting were themselves honest about the matter. It is easy for one to misrepresent a proposition when it is remembered that there is only a short step between *misunderstanding* and *misrepresentation*. A classic example of this may be seen by reading John 2: 18-22. But if people are honestly mistaken, they will be willing to consider the other side of the question. "Of all human ambitions an open mind, eagerly expectant of new discoveries and ready to remold convictions in the light of added knowledge and dispelled ignorance and misapprehensions, is the noblest, rarest, and the most difficult to achieve."

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What pertinent information for this lesson is found in verses 19-34?

Who were the "Jews"? and what was wrong with their motive?

What is the meaning of the term "disciple"?

What did Jesus mean by telling his followers to "make disciples"?

What is the principle behind such an effort? or why is it necessary?

John, His Disciples, and Jesus

What testimony did John give regarding Jesus?

Why did he refer to him as the Lamb of God?

Who heard John speak on this occasion?

How did John feel about his obligation as a witness?

How did he feel about his disciples leaving him to go after Jesus?

What were the first recorded words of Jesus?

What did Jesus ask the two disciples? and why?

What lesson should we learn from this?

What is the meaning of term "Rabbi"?

Why did John explain the meaning to his readers?

Why is it wrong for preachers to desire to have titles applied to them?

What did Jesus invite the two disciples to do?

What time of the day was it then?

What effect did the visit with Jesus have on the two disciples?

Simon Is Introduced to Jesus

Who were the two disciples who followed Jesus?

What is meant by saying that Andrew "findeth first his own brother Simon"?

What is the meaning of the term "Messiah"?

Why was Jesus called the Messiah or Christ?

What did Jesus do and say when Simon was brought to him?

Why was he to be known by another name?

What application does this principle have to us?

What is the meaning of the term "Peter"?

What is the difference between Peter and the rock upon which the church was built?

Did Peter's later life justify the Lord's

prediction concerning him? Give reasons for your answer.

Philip and Nathanael

Where did Jesus next purpose to go? and whom did he find?

Where was Jesus at this time? and what and where was Galilee?

What was peculiar about the Lord's invitation to Philip to follow him?

What did Philip then do? and what did he say?

Who was Nathanael? and where did he live?

What did Moses and the prophets write concerning Jesus?

What are some of the lessons we learn from Philip's contact with Nathanael?

What is the meaning of prejudice? What kept that attitude from further injury to Nathanael?

How did Philip deal with Nathanael's prejudice?

What lesson is there in this incident for us?

Why is it so difficult for some people to change their minds?

Lesson III—October 16, 1960

JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE

Lesson Text

John 2: 1-11

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Ca'-na of Gal'-i-lee; and the mother of Je'-sus was there:

2 And Je'-sus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when the wine failed, the mother of Je'-sus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 And Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Je'-sus saith unto them, Fill the

waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it.

9 And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when *men* have drunk freely, *then* that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of his signs did Je'-sus in Ca'-na of Gal'-i-lee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana in Galilee*" (John 2: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 108: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

- October 10. M.....Purpose of Miracles (Heb. 2: 1-4; John 20: 30, 31)
- October 11. T.Christ's Power over Nature (Matt. 8: 18-27)
- October 12. W.Christ's Power over Demons (Matt. 15: 21-28)
- October 13. T.Christ's Power over Disease (Luke 6: 12-19)
- October 14. F.Christ's Power over Death (Luke 7: 11-17)
- October 15. S.Source of Christ's Power (Matt. 28: 18-20)
- October 16. S.Purpose of Miraculous Acts (Mark 16: 15-20)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Cana in Galilee.

Persons.—Jesus, his mother, his disciples, the servants, the ruler of the feast, and the bridegroom.

Introduction

The question of miracles has an important place in the New Testament, or in the entire Bible, as for that matter. No one is a believer in the Inspired Volume who rejects the miracles which it sets forth. A miracle may be defined as an act of God without regard to law. It is the manifestation of divine power independent of any regulations other than the will of him whose power is being exercised. The entire universe had its origin as the result of a miracle (Psalm 33: 6-9; Heb. 11: 3), and God saw fit on down through the ages to demonstrate his power and authority by means of miracles. This was especially true in the ushering in of the Christian dispensation.

After explaining the miracle of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-21), Peter began his great sermon on that occasion by saying, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know." (Acts 2: 22.) It will be noted that in this statement three different terms are used to signify one and the same kind of effect. W. M. Taylor, in commenting on this passage, notes that the first term (*dunameis*) signifies power and looks specifically to the agency by which they were produced, an agency defined exactly in the words "which God did by him in the

midst of you." The second term (*terata*) denotes wonders, and has regard to the state of mind produced on the spectators by the sight of them. These "wonders" were of such a nature, so entirely out of the common course of things, and so thoroughly transcending mere human powers as to produce astonishment in those who saw them. The third term (*sēmeia*), the one used by John in the lesson now before us, namely, signs, has particular reference to their significance as being the seals by which God authenticated him who wrought them; and as being themselves also a symbolical or parabolical part of the revelation which he brought to men.

John also uses a fourth term (*erga*) to describe the miracles of Jesus, namely, "works." This word was frequently used by Jesus himself as he spoke of the work which he came to do, more often in John than anywhere else. (Cf. John 10: 37, 38; 15: 24.) In speaking of this term, Taylor further says, "Taken in connection with the emphatic assertion of the deity of Jesus Christ, in the opening section of John's gospel, this description of the miracles is the most suggestive, as indicating that what by men were regarded with wonder as indicating mighty power, were in the estimation of the Lord himself simply works requiring no more exertion at his hands than that which was common or ordinary with him as divine."

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson will be treated in the body of the text, since there is where it is found.

The Text Explained

Guests at a Marriage Feast

(John 2: 1, 2)

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage. The "third day" was evidently reckoned from the preceding paragraph, 1: 43-51; and from the usual Jewish method of counting time, it appears that there was only one full day between the calling of Philip and Nathanael and the marriage itself. That day, as well as prob-

ably parts of the first and third, was used in going from Bethany beyond the Jordan to Cana, a distance of some twenty-two miles. The place was called "Cana of Galilee," possibly to distinguish it from other places of the same name.

From the manner in which the mother of Jesus is mentioned, and particularly her activities at the marriage, it has been assumed by many Bible students that she was possibly a relative of the family where the marriage took place. John never

mentions the name of the mother of Jesus. This was probably due to his close relation to her. (Cf. John 19: 26, 27.) As has already been pointed out in a previous lesson, John never mentions his own name, and it may be added that he never mentions the name of his brother James, either.

If the mother of Jesus was related to the family where the marriage was held, that fact would account, in part at least, for the invitation to Jesus and his disciples. John 1: 43 says that "on the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee," and it could well have been that the invitation to the marriage was the cause of his being thus minded. The disciples who accompanied Jesus to the marriage were Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, John, and possibly James. (See note on verse 41 of the previous lesson.) Cana of Galilee was the home of Nathanael, and it is, of course, possible that his relationship to the bridal party may have had something to do with the inviting of Jesus and the disciples. At any rate, they were all included in the invitation.

We are told by Bible students that in Palestine the marriage ceremony began at twilight, and the feast after the marriage was at the home of the bridegroom. (Cf. Matt. 25: 1ff.) These feasts were sometimes continued for a week. (See Judg. 14: 10-17; cf. Gen. 29: 27.) We do not know, of course, just how long the feast now before us lasted, but it did continue long enough for some interesting things to happen. Marriages under normal conditions are always happy occasions, and it is worthy of note that the Son of God was willing to add his blessings to this one.

An Emergency Met

(John 2: 3-8)

And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. We are not told why the wine gave out, but some have suggested that it was due probably to the poverty of the bridegroom, or to the fact that more guests were there than had been anticipated. The reason for the failure of the wine was not important, and John therefore gives no reason for it. But he does say that the mother of Jesus went to him about the matter. Just what she

expected him to do about it is not clear, but some have thought that since she knew who he was and his relation to God, that it was not out of place for her to think that he could work a miracle. Others have suggested "that she had always found him a wise counselor, and mentioned the want to him merely that he might suggest some way of remedying it." Still others, that he and his disciples, upon hearing that the wine had failed, might leave, and thereby set the example for others to do likewise, before the lack of wine was generally known. This, again, is a relatively unimportant question, and there is no way for us to get at the correct answer.

And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. If we consider the words of Jesus in our language only, they seem somewhat harsh and disrespectful; but if we take into account the times and customs of their original setting, it will be found that they implied neither severity nor disrespect. (Cf. John 19: 26, 27.) It is possible that Jesus meant the statement as a mild rebuke, in order to teach his mother that she must not invade the realm which can be directed only by God. Augustine thinks that his remarks were practically the same as if he had said, "Thou art not the mother of that in me which worketh miracles." Jesus, throughout his ministry, taught that the relationship with him which counts for the most in God's sight is the spiritual, rather than the fleshly. (See Matt. 12: 46-50; 10: 37; cf. 2 Cor. 5: 16, 17.)

The expression "mine hour is not yet come" always refers to a crisis in his life, especially that of his death (cf. 7: 30; 13: 1; 17: 1); but in the passage now before us, the reference is apparently to the hour for the public manifestation of his Messiahship. He, in effect, told his mother to leave such matters as that to divine wisdom, and permit him to act accordingly. Various commentators have used this incident to point out two basic errors regarding the mother of Jesus, namely, (1) *Her immaculateness*. If this had been true of her, then she would not have been mistaken regarding her desire on this occasion concerning Jesus. (2) *Her present influence with Christ*. Ca-

tholicism teaches that the Lord recognizes his mother's intercessions. But the case now before us is the only instance on record of such an intercession, and it was not recognized by him as being legitimate or in keeping with the divine will.

His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. If the previous words of Jesus were meant as a mild rebuke to his mother, as has just been indicated, then she was neither offended nor discouraged by them; for the words of this verse clearly imply that she expected him to do something out of the ordinary. She gave direction to the servants to render unlimited obedience; and although her words were not addressed to us, it would be to our eternal benefit if we would obey them. Robertson thinks that Mary took comfort in the "not yet" and recognized in her Son the right to independence of her, as it respected his Messiahship; but she evidently expected him to relieve the embarrassing situation which confronted the wedding party in some way, as indeed he did.

It may still be somewhat difficult for some to see the consistency between the remark of Jesus to his mother, and his almost immediate performance of the very thing which her request implied. A similar situation is found in the first part of John 7, and a look at it may help us here. In replying to the request of his skeptical brethren that he go up to the feast of the tabernacles, Jesus said, "Go ye up to the feast: I go not up unto this feast; because my time is not yet fulfilled. And having said these things unto them, he abode still in Galilee." (Verses 8, 9.)

Then the very next verse says, "But when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret." Did Jesus contradict himself? The answer, of course, is No. Taylor quotes Westcott as saying that there is no inconsistency between the Lord's declaration that his "time is not yet fulfilled," and the almost immediate granting of the request of his brethren that he go to the feast; for "a change of moral and spiritual conditions is not measured by length of time." Mary recognized her Son's independence of her in matters respecting his Messiahship, and when that was done, Jesus was free to per-

form the miracle without the appearance of yielding to human direction.

Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece. Almost any Jewish home would have some kind of containers for the water which the family and visitors would need for their ceremonial cleansing (cf. Mark 7: 3, 4); but in a place where a marriage was being solemnized, it is not surprising to find a number—in this case six—of such vessels for the benefit of the wedding guests. The record says that they each would hold two or three firkins. A firkin, according to recognized authorities, was roughly equalled to the Hebrew liquid *bath*, or approximate eight or nine gallons. This means, then, that each pot held about twenty gallons, or a total for the six of some one hundred twenty gallons. These large containers were filled by means of smaller vessels, such as the woman of Samaria carried to the well for her supply of water. (See John 4: 7, 28.)

Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it. McGarvey and Pendleton note that this statement serves two purposes. (1) It emphasizes the great quantity of wine which was produced by Jesus; and (2) it shows that there was no room to add anything to the contents of the jars. As already indicated, there was approximately one hundred twenty gallons of wine; but since we do not know the number of guests present, nor the duration of the feast, we cannot therefore judge of the Lord's bounty. But since the supply on hand had just given out, it is reasonable to suppose that one hundred twenty gallons would certainly be more than enough to meet the normal needs of the feast. (Cf. The Lord's miracles of feeding the five and four thousand, and the amounts which were left over. See Matt. 14: 13-21; 15: 32-38.)

The Result and Purpose of the Miracle

(John 1: 9-11)

And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water

knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now.

Some Bible students think that the "ruler of the feast" (found only in John 2: 8, 9), was a kind of head waiter, butler, or slave who was responsible for managing a banquet; while others are of the opinion that he was especially appointed by the bridegroom from among the guests invited to the feast. But whatever his status, he was in charge of the banquet, and it was to him that the servants took the wine which Jesus had just made.

There is only one way to explain how the water which was poured into the waterpots was wine when it was drawn out, and that way is a miracle. That is what John calls it, namely, a sign; and all who believe the Bible will accept his testimony as being true. (Cf. John 21: 24.) Taylor sums up the situation in these words: "Real water was placed in the pots. The Lord Jesus himself did not touch one of the vessels. The water was poured in and the wine was drawn out by the servants. There was no collusion between him and them, and they saw all that there was to be seen. The water was put where it was not usual to put wine, and so nothing in the vessels from which the wine was drawn could give that which was drawn from them the flavor or appearance of wine. The wine was tasted and judged by one who knew neither how it was produced nor whence it came. Now let all these circumstances be put together and judged as we should judge of the evidence in a court of law, and it will be impossible to come to any other conclusion than that this was a real transmutation of water into wine, and that it was effected by the power of God."

The words of the ruler of the feast regarding the usual practice of men in serving wine—the best first, and then that which is inferior—simply indicated his experience or observation, or both, in such matters. There is nothing in the text which even intimates that the guests at the feast now under consideration had drunk

to excess; and there is certainly no indication that Jesus, in providing an abundant supply of wine, was encouraging intoxication. The wine which people drank at such feasts in those days was unlike the intoxicating wines which are served in many such places now. In making the wine out of the water which the servants poured into the waterpots, Jesus did no more than he had always done as Creator and Renewer of the earth. The only difference was in the length of time it required to do it.

This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him. Not only was this the beginning of the miracles which Jesus performed while he was here on the earth; it was also the beginning of a series of eight which John selected to prove the deity of Jesus. (See John 20: 30, 31.) The eight miracles or signs which John records are (1) the turning of water into wine (2: 1-11); (2) the healing of the nobleman's son (4: 46-54); (3) the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (5: 1-9); (4) feeding the five thousand (6: 1-14); (5) walking on the sea of Galilee (6: 16-21); (6) the opening of the eyes of the man born blind (9: 1-7); (7) the raising of Lazarus from the dead (11: 1-44); and (8) the draught of fishes (21: 1-6). It is interesting to note that of these eight miracles, only one, the fourth, is recorded in all four of the Gospels; and it is also the only miracle which Jesus wrought that found in all four of the records. Of the other seven recorded by John, only one is found in the other gospels, namely that of Jesus walking upon the water. (Matt. 14: 22; 33; Mark 6: 45-52.)

The turning of water into wine manifested the glory of Christ in the same sense that the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19: 1), and the church makes known the manifold (that is, "much variegated" or "many colored") wisdom of God. (Eph. 3: 10.) It is not surprising that his disciples believed on him, involving, as Westcott notes, "the absolute transference of trust from one's self to another."

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Tell something of the place which miracles have in the Bible?
What is a miracle?
How did Peter emphasize the place of miracles in the life of Christ?
Give the meaning of the three words he used for miracles.
What other word did John use for miracles? and what does it imply?

Guests at a Marriage Feast

The third day from what?
Where did the marriage take place?
What is suggested by the prominent part that Mary had at the feast?
What probable reason did John have for not recording her name?
What were the probable reasons for inviting Jesus and his disciples?
Who were the disciples who went with him to the marriage?
What were some of the Bible customs connected with such gatherings?

An Emergency Met

What information did Mary relay to Jesus? and why?
How did Jesus answer her?
What was the Lord's motive in making such a reply?
What did Jesus teach regarding the relation of others to him?
What did he mean by saying, "Mine hour is not yet come"?
What basic errors regarding Mary are corrected by the facts of this lesson?

What lesson may we learn from her words to the servants?
Why did Jesus apparently decline to act, and then almost immediately do that which he had been requested to do?
What other incident in the life of Christ illustrates this principle?
How did Jesus go about working the miracle?
About how much wine did he make? Give reasons for your answer.
What was his probable reason for making so much wine?

The Result and Purpose of the Miracle

Who was the ruler of the feast?
What did he do when he tasted the wine which Jesus made? and why?
How can any one who believes the Bible explain that which Jesus did?
What did the ruler of the feast mean by his words to the bridegroom?
Did Jesus encourage intoxication by making an abundance of wine?
What can you say of the wine of that day which was drunk on such occasions?
What was the unusual thing about the Lord's producing the wine on this occasions?
What does John say of this miracle?
Give a list of the miracles in John's record of the gospel.
What was his purpose in recording them?
How many of Christ's miracles are found in all four of the gospel records?
How many of the miracles used by John are not found in the other records?
In what way did the turning of the water into wine manifest the glory of Christ?
What is implied by saying that his disciples believed on him?

Lesson IV—October 23, 1960

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

Lesson Text

John 2: 13-22

13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Je'-sus went up to Je-ru'-sa-lem.

14 And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables;

16 And to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.

18 The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Je'-sus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Je'-sus had said.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"My house shall be called a house of prayer"* (Matt 21:13.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Psalm 15.

Daily Bible Readings

- October 17. M..... Temple Cleansed (Matt. 21: 12-17)
- October 18. T..... Church, God's House Today (1 Tim. 3: 14-16)
- October 19. W..... Church, Christ's Body (Eph. 1: 15-23)
- October 20. T..... Christ, Head of the Church (Eph. 5: 22-30)
- October 21. F..... Cleansed People (1 Cor. 6: 8-11)
- October 22. S..... Christians, the Temple of God (1 Cor. 3: 16-23)
- October 23. S..... Life Approved of God (Psalm 15)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—The temple in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, those commercializing the temple, and the Jewish leaders.

Introduction

In the verse which intervenes between this lesson and the last one, we are told that Jesus, his family, and his disciples made a visit to Capernaum. "After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and there they abode not many days." The reason for the short stay in Capernaum was due to the fact that the feast of the passover was at hand, but even though the sojourn was brief, it is of interest to us; for it throws light on two things, namely, (1) It shows where Jesus spent much of his time between his baptism and the first passover feast; and (2) it helps to explain why Jesus chose Capernaum as his place of residence after leaving Nazareth. But all of the events from John 2: 13 to 4: 54 took place before Jesus made the change in his residence.

Another thing which we learn from the verse quoted above is that Jesus did not break his family ties abruptly after beginning his ministry. He apparently remained with them until he went up to Jerusalem to attend the first passover feast after his baptism. At least three of his disciples lived in the vicinity of Capernaum—Andrew, Peter, and Philip; and that fact may have contributed somewhat to the

visit to the city at this time. And it is possible that the short stay there may have caused Jesus to see the advisability of his making that city the radiating point for his great Galilean ministry, which followed the imprisonment of John the Baptist. (See Matt. 4: 12-25.)

At any rate, Capernaum was to play a major role in the ministry of Jesus, and it is not out of place at this point to say a few words about what Jesus probably saw on this visit. The city itself was a great commercial center, with teeming suburbs, such as Bethsaida and Chorazin, and this would be a great contrast as it respected the quiet village where he grew to manhood. The densest population in all Galilee was found in Capernaum; and in keeping with its great commercial activities it was but natural that trade arteries would lead into it from both Egypt and Babylonia; with the result that no other area of Palestine contained so many of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Great highways also went out from Capernaum to all parts of Palestine and Syria; and any work which was planted there would later spread to all parts of the country. Capernaum must have made a deep impression on the mind of Jesus.

The Golden Text

"My house shall be called a house of prayer" This is a quotation from Isa. 56: 7, and was used by Jesus when he cleansed the temple near the close of his ministry. Both the beginning and the end of his work among the Lord's people was characterized by a protest against the desecration of the temple. The full statement from Isaiah is as follows: "Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to

love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isa. 56: 6, 7)

We can learn from the setting of

the golden text something of the spirit which God expects his people to manifest in his house. This spirit is to be characterized by worship and rejoicing. Paul wrote Timothy as follows, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3: 14, 15.) The "temple" was the house of God during the days of Jesus, but his "spiritual temple" is God's house now. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17.) There is no place for commercializing or other worldly activity in the house of God today.

The "house of God" is the place

where the Lord meets his people. (Cf. Matt. 18: 20.) It is there that they engage in public worship and commune with their Maker. There are some who profess to believe in Christianity, but who place a light estimate on public worship. They think, and sometimes say, that they can worship at home, and do not need therefore to go to a common meeting place and engage with others in prayer and devotion. But it is a fact which can be observed on every hand that few, if any, who habitually neglect public worship attend to private worship in the quiet of home. Public worship is not something which has been arbitrarily enjoined upon the Lord's people; on the contrary, it grows out of the properties and wants of our social nature.

The Text Explained

The Cleansing of the Temple

(John 2: 13-16)

And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. If it were not for the narrative which John wrote, we would not know that the public ministry of Jesus was much over a year in length. Mark, for example, covers only thirty-eight days in the life of Christ, exclusive of the forty days of temptation. Only John mentions this first passover after Christ's baptism. The other three writers relate no incident of his ministry in Judaea; and if it were not for the gospel of John, it could not be positively proved that Jesus went up to Jerusalem during his public life, prior to the time of his arrest and crucifixion. We are dependent on John's record therefore for our information regarding the length of the Lord's ministry. If the feast of 5: 1 was the passover, as some think, although this is not certain, then we have four passovers mentioned in the life of Christ. (See 2: 13; 6: 4; 11: 55; 12: 1.) This shows that the entire length of the Lord's ministry was some over three years. The first and last passovers which are mentioned were near the beginning and the end of his ministry. (Cf. 7: 2; 10: 22 for two other feasts — tabernacles and dedication.)

It should be noted that John speaks of the feast now before us as "the passover of the Jews." This was evidently because he wrote for Gentiles,

as well as for Jews. There would be many Gentiles who would not know what was meant by the simple term "passover." Bible students and travellers tell us that it is literally true that one goes "up" to Jerusalem from practically any part of Palestine. Jerusalem was the seat of the Jewish economy, and it was fitting that Jesus should begin his public ministry there. That city later became the radiating point for preaching the gospel. (See Acts 1: 8; cf. Luke 24: 46, 47.)

And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: In speaking of the temple, the New Testament writers did not always distinguish between the sanctuary (*naos*) and the outer court (*hieron*) which surrounded the holy place or sanctuary. The first temple was known as Solomon's temple, and it was destroyed by the Babylonians when Judah was taken captive. After the return from Babylon, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel. This second temple was greatly enlarged and embellished by Herod the Great, and it has been described as "one of the most costly and beautiful buildings on the earth." Johnson says that it was of white marble, with roofs of cedar, and was rather a collection of buildings, courts, and porches, than a single building. The entire temple enclosure covered nineteen acres. The temple proper was in the center, and

it was surrounded by (1) the court of Israel, (2) the court of the women, and (3) the court of the Gentiles. It was in this outer or last named court that the traffic described in the text took place.

Alford thinks that the market which Jesus destroyed sprang up after the exile, with a view to the convenience of those who had to come from a distance to engage in the temple worship. They would need animals and birds for their offerings, and to change their foreign money into the sacred shekel, which alone was allowed to be paid for the temple tax. It appears from Matt. 17: 24-27 that this tax could be paid at other places than Jerusalem; but this lesson is concerned with what took place at the temple. It was all right to have the animals and birds on hand for the convenience of those who came from a distance, and to provide a medium of exchange so that they could get the proper money for their tax (cf. Ex. 30: 11-16); but all of that should have been done outside the temple grounds. It was the court of the Gentiles which the Bible called "a house of prayer for all the nations." (See Mark 11: 17.) It was only in this part of the temple that the Gentiles could go.

And he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. It appears from the diminutive of the original that Jesus took some of the rushes which were probably used for bedding for the cattle and sheep and twisted them into a cord. That could not have been regarded as a formidable weapon, in and of itself; but was used more as a symbol. Some people in trying to justify the use of force on the part of the Lord's people have used this as an example; but there is not the slightest evidence that Jesus touched even an animal with the cord he made, to say nothing of striking a man.

Jesus, in calling God his Father, asserted both his Messiahship and his right to cleanse the temple of the unholy practices. He, accordingly, drove out the traffickers, along with their

cattle and sheep, poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and ordered the dealers to take out their doves, which were doubtless in cages and could not go out alone like the oxen and sheep. There is no indication that any of the violators tried to resist the efforts of Jesus to rid the temple of their sinful practices.

In this first cleansing of the temple, Jesus charged the evil perpetrators of making his Father's house "a house of merchandise"; but in the second cleansing he said that they had made it "a den of robbers." (See Mark 11: 17 and the parallels in Matthew and Luke.) It is also well to notice that in cleansing the temple, Jesus did not destroy the property of the dealers. Their oxen, sheep, and doves were without the temple, and they could gather up their money and remove the overturned tables. The house of the Lord, either then or now, is no place for practices which detract from the worship which God has authorized for his people.

The Result of Zealous Action

(John 2: 17)

His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up. This is a quotation from Psalm 69: 9, and the disciples were reminded of it when they saw the vigorous action of Jesus in driving out those who were desecrating the temple. The Lord was characterized by intense ardor and determination to see that the evil practices which were being carried on in the temple were brought to a halt. The expression "shall eat me up" may be used in the sense of "shall absorb me, or engage my entire attention." (Cf. John 4: 34.)

In commenting on this passage, Albert Barnes says, "Here is an example for ministers and for all Christians. In Jesus this was the great commanding sentiment of his life. In us it should be also. In this manifestation of zeal he began and ended his ministry. In this we should begin and end our lives. We learn, also, that ministers of religion should aim to purify the church of God. Wicked men, conscience-smitten, will tremble when they see proper zeal in the ministers of Jesus Christ; and there is no combination of wicked men, and no

form of depravity, that can stand before the faithful, zealous, pure preaching of the gospel. The preaching of every minister should be such that wicked men will feel that they must either become Christians or leave the house of God, or spend their lives there in the consciousness of guilt and the fear of hell."

There is another sense in which the zeal for God's house ate up the Son who came to do his will, namely, it marred and wasted his fame, and finally resulted in his suffering and death on the cross. This seems to be the idea which was expressed in the psalm from which the quotation was made. "For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me." (Psalm 69: 9.)

A Sign Requested and Given

The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? The "Jews" were the Jewish leaders, and they may have based their request for a sign on such passages as Deut. 13: 1-3. Jesus had appeared in the temple as a reformer (cf. Mal. 3: 1), which was equivalent to his claim to be the Messiah, and they probably felt justified in requesting a miraculous demonstration from him. There is, of course, no ground to justify the conclusion that the Jews were wholly sincere in their request for a sign; for if they had been, his reference to his Father's house, to say nothing of what they had just seen him do, would have caused them to make some reverent inquiries regarding him.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The original word for "temple" in verse 14 is *hieron*, that is, the enclosures or courts, but in this verse the original term for "temple" is *na o s*, the sanctuary itself. Wesley, Barnes, et al, think that it is possible that Jesus pointed to his own body when he challenged them to destroy "this temple," but that is quite improbable; for it appears that his disciples, as well as the Jews, understood that he was referring to the temple structure which was before them. But the Lord's statement was a real test of the sincerity of the Jews when they asked for a sign.

If we grant that they did understand Jesus to mean that he could rebuild the temple of Herod in three days—a wholly impossible feat, as they viewed the matter; then the least they could have done, had they been honest, would be to ask him just what he meant by the statement. But instead of doing that, they promptly concluded that he was completely irrational. Not only did they manifest their insincerity then; they did the same thing at his trial. (See Matt. 26: 59-61.) There is a lesson here which we should all keep in mind, namely, It is easy, by means of a few small alterations, or with a different meaning attached to one's words, to make it appear that he is teaching something different from that which he actually taught. People who do things like that nearly always try to state the other person's views in *their* words, and with a meaning to his words which *they*, and not he, attached to them. They seldom ever use the speaker's or the author's own words, or ask, "What does *he* mean by that expression?"

The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. We learn from historical sources that Herod began work on the temple, as this statement says, forty-six years before, but that the work was not actually completed until A.D. 64, under Herod Agrippa II, or thirty-four years later. This, of course, did not refer only to the sanctuary, but to the other buildings as well. This was all the Jews could think of when the building of the temple was mentioned; and so, when they took a superficial meaning of his words, his statement could only appear to them as extremely absurd and ridiculous. But John frequently, more than any other of the gospel writers, commented on that which he wrote, and explained that which Jesus meant. Such misunderstandings are often found in John's record (cf. 3: 3, 4), and he apparently uses them to show in miniature the total reaction of the Jews to Christ. As C. K. Barrett notes, the Jews perceived only that which was superficially visible in Jesus, and naturally rejected as absurd the suggestion that he was the Son of God. If they had

penetrated beneath the surface they would have seen the truth of his claim.

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. Truth frequently lies

dormant for years before its significance is realized. (Cf. Acts 2: 39.) Those that "are afar off" were the Gentiles, but about eight or ten years later it took a miracle to convince Peter that the Gentiles were entitled to gospel privileges. (See Acts 10; 11: 1-18.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Where did Jesus, his family, and his disciples go, following the last lesson?
What light do we gain from that visit?
How long did Jesus apparently remain with his family?
What probable reason did Jesus have for going to Capernaum as a place of residence?

The Golden Text

Give the setting of the golden text.
Under what circumstances did Jesus use that scripture?
What lesson do we learn from the original setting of the golden text?
How is the lesson applied to us today?
What is the "house of God" now? and what is the purpose of the assembly?
Why can't people worship God in their homes instead of the assembly?
What is the nature and purpose of public worship?

The Cleansing of The Temple

What do we learn from John regarding the length of the Lord's public ministry?
What important part of the Lord's ministry does John alone record?
How do we arrive at the length of his public ministry?
What was the occasion of one of Christ's first visits to Jerusalem?
How did John refer to the feast? and why?

What did Christ find in the temple which displeased him?
What temple was this? and in what part of the temple were the sinful practices being carried on?
What was the purpose of the commercial transactions?
How did Jesus go about cleansing the temple?
Is this a fair example of the use of force on the part of Christians? Give reasons for your answer.
What did Jesus imply by calling God his Father?
What difference in the charge against the violators did Jesus make in the two cleansings of the temple?

The Result of Zealous Action

When Jesus cleansed the temple, what was called to the disciples' mind?
In what sense did zeal for God's house eat Christ up?

A Sign Requested and Given

What "Jews" made this request? and why?
What reply did Jesus make to them?
In what sense would this reply test the sincerity of the Jews?
What should have been their reaction to the Lord's statement, seeing that they considered it impossible?
What lesson should we learn from this?
How did the Jews answer Jesus?
What impression did this make on the disciples?

Lesson V—October 30, 1960

THE NEW BIRTH

Lesson Text

John 3: 1-10

1 Now there was a man of the Phar-i-sees, named Nic-o-de'-mus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rab'-bi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Je'-sus answered and said unto Mm, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nic-o-de'-mus saith unto him,

How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Je'-sus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew.

8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof,

but knowest not whence it cometh,
and whither it goeth: so is every one
that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nic-o-de'-mus answered and said

unto him, How can these things be?

10 Je'-sus answered and said unto
him, Art thou the teacher of Is'-ra-el,
and understandest not these things?

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (John 3: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 3: 11-17.

Daily Bible Readings

October 24. M..... Born of the Will of God (John 1: 10-18)
October 25 T..... Begotten Unto a Living Hope (1 Pet. 1: 3-12)
October 26 W..... Begotten by the Gospel (1 Cor. 4: 1-15)
October 27. T..... Washing of Regeneration Tit. 3: 1-7)
October 28. F..... Begotten by the Gospel (1 Pet. 1: 22-25)
October 29. S..... Begotten by the Word of Truth (James 1: 12-18)
October 30. S..... The New Man (Eph. 4: 17-24)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and Nicodemus.

Introduction

One of the first things we should get clearly fixed in our minds, as we begin the study of this lesson, is the fact that the language which Jesus used in discussing the new birth is largely figurative. This is especially true of the term “born.” It was necessary for Jesus, during much of the time of his earthly ministry, to speak in dark sayings. “These things have I spoken unto you in dark sayings: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.” (John 16: 25.) The marginal reading of “dark sayings” is *parables*.

The people to whom Christ spoke during that period of his ministry were not able to understand the spiritual things which he came to make known. This was also true, to a large degree, of his apostles. But when the will of Christ began to be made known, beginning with the first Pentecost following his ascension, plain and literal language was used in telling people what to do in order to be saved. In commenting on this

question, Isaac Errett says, “Here, therefore, we may learn the terms of entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Why will men puzzle themselves over the enigmatical language of John 3: 1-5 and perpetually appeal for authority to a private conversation with Nicodemus at a time when, for many reasons, Jesus veiled his instructions in parables, when we have here the terms of entrance into the kingdom announced *by authority*, in unfigurative terms, in the literal and positive language of law?”

It is, of course, well and proper to study figurative language which was used by Jesus in his ministry; but we must learn to interpret such language in the light of the plain and literal; instead of trying to make the figurative the standard of our thinking and conduct. When people have inquiring minds, and are willing to ask questions, as did the apostles, and then search diligently for the answers in the revealed will of God, they will have little trouble in learning what God’s will is for them. (Read Matt. 13: 10-18.)

The Golden Text

This part of the lesson is found in the lesson text, and it will be considered in its proper order.

The Text Explained

A Nightly Visit with Jesus

(John 3: 1, 2)

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of

the Jews: The term “now” with which our lesson begins is explanatory and transitional, rather than adverbative. John had just said, “Now

when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any man should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." (John 2: 23-25.) Nicodemus was an example of the race which Jesus knew so well, and the text now under consideration proved the correctness of the observation just quoted—Jesus did know the man Nicodemus, along with the others.

John alone of the gospel writers mentions Nicodemus. He is mentioned here first, and it appears that he was seeking information regarding Jesus, although he did not state the purpose of his coming. His next appearance is in 7: 45-52 as defender of Jesus, being himself a member of the Sanhedrin, as is generally supposed. His final appearance is in 19: 38-42 where he joins with Joseph of Arimathea, a fellow member of the Sanhedrin, in burying the body of Jesus. From these three instances it can be seen that Nicodemus displayed a genuine interest in Jesus in the face of almost unanimous hostility on the part of his Pharisee colleagues, which suggests, as *Harper's Bible Dictionary* notes, a virtual discipleship within his heart. The Pharisees were one of the three principal sects of the Jews.

The same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him. There can be but little doubt about *why* Nicodemus came to Jesus, but there has been much speculation as to why he came at night. The miracles of Jesus, along with his declaration of authority over the temple, had made a deep impression on the Jewish leaders, and Nicodemus apparently wanted some direct information regarding this newly arisen teacher; and he evidently felt that the best way to get that information was to go directly to him personally.

In answering the question, "Why by night?" many observers suppose that it was because of the fear of the Jews, and that may have been true; but when we consider Nicodemus' general character as dis-

played in the other references to him, it is not certain that fear was the dominating factor in his nocturnal visit. He may have wanted to avoid comment by other members of the Sanhedrin, and he may have hesitated to commit himself to an unknown teacher until he learned more about his doctrine. It is altogether possible that his chief motive in coming at night was because he wanted a quiet, personal conversation, such as he could not hope to obtain during the daytime. But whatever his motive, the record says simply, "the same came unto him by night." If we keep in mind the manner in which the houses of that time and place were constructed, it is easy for us to understand that Nicodemus could go directly to the room where Jesus was, that is, the guest chamber, without being seen by other people in the house. An outside stairway led to the room usually reserved for visitors.

Nicodemus was a "teacher of Israel" (verse 10), but he addressed Jesus by the very title which his own disciples applied to him. The term "Rabbi" literally means *My Master*; and, as Milligan and Moulton point out, we may be sure that a member of the sect which had carefully scrutinized the credentials of John the Baptist (1: 19-24) would not lightly address Jesus by this title of honor, or acknowledge him as a teacher. Nicodemus was serious when he came to Jesus for this interview.

Such miracles as Jesus had been performing in Jerusalem during the early days of his ministry attracted attention and challenged investigation; and they gave evidence, as Nicodemus freely acknowledged, that God was with him. (Cf. Acts 10: 38.) And if God was with him, it was necessary to assume that God approved his teaching. (See Acts 2: 22.) These words do not necessarily mean that Nicodemus thought that Jesus was the Messiah, but he did certainly recognize his as "a teacher from God."

At Grips with the Issue

(John 3: 3-7)

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. It may seem remarkable that Jesus would make his

reply to Nicodemus in this manner, but when we take into consideration the fact that the Jewish ruler has just acknowledged that the young Galilean was a teacher come from God and had the approval of God, it is certainly not strange that he would give him the information he needed. The Jewish teachers were expecting the Messianic kingdom to appear; and, as Alford points out, Jesus informs Nicodemus that it is life, rather than *learning*, that is needed for that kingdom, and that life must begin by birth. He then quotes Luther as saying, "My teaching is not of *doing* and *leaving undone*, but of a *change in the man*—so that it is, not *new works* done, but a *new man* to do them; not another *life* only, but another *birth*!"

Human life, as we understand it, is always ushered into the sphere where it must grow and develop by a birth and Jesus is teaching here that the same thing is true of the spiritual life. It, too, must have its beginning in the new order of things by a birth. This was startling news to Nicodemus; for he, along with other Jewish teachers of his day, supposed that all the children of Abraham would automatically become citizens of the kingdom of God. John the Baptist had denounced that idea (Matt. 3: 8, 9); and Jesus had earlier referred to a birth according to the will of God (John 1: 11-13); but Nicodemus had not yet been able to comprehend that viewpoint.

The expression "Verily, verily," is used only by John (twenty-four times), and it was employed by Jesus to give emphasis to an unusually solemn and weighty declaration. To "see" the kingdom of God means to possess or enjoy it. (Cf. Matt. 5: 8.) Textual critics are not united on whether the reading should be "born anew" or "born from above." (See marginal reading.) Phillips renders the passage in these words: "Believe me," returned Jesus, "a man cannot even see the Kingdom of God without being born over again." This is apparently the way Nicodemus understood the matter, as may be seen in the next verse; he thought that Christ was referring to a second birth. The implication is that Nicodemus came to Jesus to inquire about the *new doctrine* which Christ was teaching; and he was told in substance that the

need was not so much for a new doctrine, but for a *new life*; and that that life would have to begin with a *new birth*.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? It is said that the Jews regarded a proselyte to the Jewish faith as "like an infant just born" (Lightfoot), and in view of this it is hardly probable that Nicodemus completely misunderstood the Lord's statement, as his question seems to imply. There was no doubt some ignorance regarding the question on the part of Nicodemus, and it is altogether possible that there was also a spirit of not wanting to understand the matter of a new birth, especially as it applied to the Jews; and the result was that the learned rabbi undertook to reduce to an absurdity that which the Lord had just said. (Cf. John 6: 60.) Ridicule is a trenchant weapon in the hands of those with preconceived ideas!

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born anew. Jesus, for the moment, passed over Nicodemus' question, and told him plainly something of the nature of the new birth. Without entering into the controversy which has for generations been waged over the meaning of being born of water, we may say that practically all Bible scholars unite in saying that the reference is to water baptism. There have been and are, of course, some who deny this; but, as Alford notes, all attempts to get rid of these two plain facts—outward sign of baptism and inward change wrought by the Holy Spirit—have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped. Adam Clarke points out that "baptism by water, into the Christian faith, was necessary to every Jew and Gentile that entered into the kingdom of the Messiah."

Anyone who is familiar with the facts in the case knows that what is commonly referred to as the "birth" or *bringing forth* is not that which imparts the life to the person who is

born. Life must always exist before the bringing forth takes place, if the birth is to be normal. The birth simply introduces the life into a sphere or condition suited to its needs, and where it can grow, develop, and function properly. That is what water baptism does: it simply introduces or delivers the child of God into a sphere, in this case the church, where he can grow, develop, and function as God ordains that he should. But if there were no prior life, there would be no normal child of God to deliver into the church. The imparting of the new life to the one who had been dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2: 1), is the part which is performed by the Holy Spirit in the new birth.

Paul declares that those who are in Christ are new creatures, or, as the margin has it, *there is a new creation* (2 Cor. 5: 17); and that implies the beginning of a new life. "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.) Paul tells us in Tit. 3: 5, 6 that the "renewing" or the making of the "new creature" is done by the Holy Spirit. "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, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Thayer says that this "renewing" is that which is "effected by the Holy Spirit."

Luke's record of the virgin birth of Christ illustrates this principle exactly. "And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1: 34, 35.) There would have been no life for Mary to deliver if it had not been previously imparted by the Holy Spirit; and just so, in the case of one who is baptized into Christ, there

would be no new life, if it were not begotten by the Spirit. The old man is destroyed, the new man is created, and the obedience is completed when baptism is performed according to the word. (Cf. Eph. 5: 25-27; Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 37, 38; 22: 16; 1 Pet. 3: 21; etc., etc.) This is the meaning of being "born of water and the Spirit." (Cf. Rom. 1: 16; 1 Pet. 1: 22, 23; 1 John 5: 1; 1 Cor. 4: 15.) It should always be kept in mind that if the life which has been begotten is not delivered, it can never grow and function as it should. This should be enough to convince anyone of the importance of baptism in the gospel plan of salvation; for it is by or through baptism that the newly born child of God enters the church. (Cf. 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13.)

The Lesson Illustrated

(John 3: 8-10)

The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. This is one of the most controversial passages in the New Testament. The term *pneuma*, from which we have both "wind" and "Spirit" in the passage now before us, occurs nearly four hundred times in the New Testament, and in no other place is it translated "wind," except in Heb. 1: 7 where a quotation is made from Psalm 104: 4. But Greek scholars tell us that *pneuma* does mean both "wind" and "spirit," as may be seen in both the Septuagint and the classics. It is also true that the same word means both wind and spirit in other languages, such as the Hebrew, Syriac, and Latin. Furthermore, the term from which we have "bloweth" occurs in five other places in the New Testament, and always refers to *wind*. (Cf. John 6: 18.)

With all these facts before us, it is possible that Jesus was using an allegory to illustrate that which he had just said about the new birth. Nicodemus had objected to the teaching on the ground that he couldn't understand it, and Jesus, in effect, told him that the ground of his objection was not consistent with his usual behavior; for he was continually believing things which he did not understand, including the one which

Christ just cited—the wind. (Cf. Eccles. 11: 5.) The proper way to judge such matters is by the results produced, rather than by an attempt to fathom the philosophy of them. Wonderful changes are wrought in the lives of some people which are almost unbelievable, when God is allowed to have his way with them. (Cf. Matt. 19: 24-26.) We may not understand *how* these changes were brought about, but we do not refuse to believe that they were accomplished. This, said Jesus, is the way it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? Nicodemus still did not understand, but he appeared somewhat more cautious in his attitude toward Jesus. In his reply to the Jewish teacher, Jesus emphasized Nicodemus' position as a teacher of Israel. Literally, he said, "Art *thou* the teacher of the Israel?" Note the two articles which are in the original. It was as if he had said, "Surely a man like you should understand these things!"

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What should we try to understand first about this lesson? Why?
Why did Jesus speak in parabolic language so often?
What difference was made when his will began to be made known?
How should we treat enigmatical language in Bible study?
Contrast the disciples of Jesus with the multitudes in this respect.

A Nightly Visit with Jesus

What is the force of the term "now" in verse 1?
Who was Nicodemus? and what is known of him?
How would being a Pharisee affect his general attitude toward Jesus?
What was the apparent purpose of his going to see Jesus?
Why did he go at night?
How did he address Jesus? and why?
What is the meaning of "Rabbi"?
What estimate did Nicodemus give of Jesus? and why?
Was he correct in this estimate? Give reason for your answer.

At Grips with the Lesson

What was the probable reason for Jesus' opening the subject as he did?
What did Jesus say about being born?
Why is a birth so important?
Why was Nicodemus so startled at the Lord's statement?
What is the significance of Verily, verily?
What is the meaning of "see" the kingdom of God?

What did Nicodemus apparently understand Jesus to mean about the birth of which he spoke?
What reply did Nicodemus make to the Lord's statement?
What appeared to be his attitude in this reply?
Why do many people try to ridicule Bible teaching?
How did Jesus react to the reply of Nicodemus?
What great announcement did Christ then make?
What does it mean to be born of water?
Why do many people object to this?
What is the purpose of a "birth" or "bringing forth"?
How does the life of a child of God begin?
What is the Spirit's part in the new birth?
How does the virgin birth of Christ illustrate this?
What means does the Holy Spirit use in "begetting" any one?
How is the importance of baptism emphasized in this lesson?
State in your own words the meaning of being born of the water and Spirit.

The Lesson Illustrated

What illustration did Jesus use?
Why was this necessary?
What effect did the illustration have on Nicodemus?
What is the proper way to judge things of this nature which we do not understand?
What apparent change in Nicodemus' attitude is seen here?
What did Jesus then say to him?
What did the Lord emphasize regarding his guest?

Lesson VI—November 6, 1960

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Lesson Text

John 4: 7-14, 20-26

7 There cometh a woman of Sam-
ma'-ri-a to draw water: Je'-sus saith
unto her, Give me to drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away
into the city to buy food.

9 The Sa-mar'-i-tan woman there-
fore saith unto him, How is it that
thou, being a Jew, askest drink of
me, who am a Sa-mar'-i-tan woman?

(For Jews have no dealings with Samar'i-tans.)

10 Je'-sus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

13 Je'-sus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this

mountain; and ye say, that in Je-ru'-sa-lem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Je-ru'-sa-lem, shall ye worship the Father.

22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Mes-si'-ah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

26 Je'-sus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth”* (John 4: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 25: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

October 31. M.....	Facts Concerning Samaria (2 Chron. 10: 1-19)
November 1. T.....	Conditions in Samaria (2 Kings 17: 19-41)
November 2. W.....	Samaritans Were Idolaters (1 Kings 12: 25-33)
November 3. T.....	Samaritans Converted (John 4: 27-42)
November 4. F.....	Attitude of Samaritans (Luke 9: 51-56)
November 5. S.....	Philip's Work in Samaria (Acts 8: 4-24)
November 6. S.....	Believers in Samaria (John 4: 39-42)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Sychar, in Samaria.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the woman of Samaria.

Introduction

The land of Samaria was one of the three divisions of Palestine west of the Jordan. It included the territory which was formerly occupied by the tribe of Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and was situated in the central part of the country, between Judaea and Galilee. The capital city of Samaria was also called Samaria, and it was built by Omri (1 Kings 16: 24.) The people of Samaria, that is, the original Samaritans, were a mixed race of people who sprang from the poorer people of the ten tribes who were left when they were taken captive by the Assyrians, and

some foreigners who were brought there by the authorities who had removed the Israelites. (See 2 Kings 17: 24; Ezra 4: 1-10.)

These new inhabitants of Samaria at first did not fear Jehovah, and he, accordingly, sent lions among them, and they killed some of them. Word of this reached the king of Assyria, and he commanded that a priest who had been taken captive be sent back to Samaria to dwell among the people, and teach them the law of Jehovah. This was done, but the people did not free themselves entirely from idolatry. (See 2 Kings 17: 25-29.)

The hostility which grew up between the Jews and the Samaritans became very pronounced, and the result was that there was little or no intercourse between them. Much of the background of the bitter animosity which existed between the two races may be learned from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. When the Jews first came back to their homeland from Babylon with plans to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans offered to help them, but the Jews, doubting their sincerity, rejected the

offer. When Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of the city of Jerusalem, the Samaritans did all they could to block his efforts. The Samaritans got permission from the Persian monarch to build their own temple, which they did on mount Gerizim, and claimed that that was the place which was designated by Moses for the place of worship. They accepted only the five books of Moses, and rejected all the rest. These are some of the reasons why the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is a part of the lesson text, and it will be considered in regular order.

The Text Explained

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. We learn from the first part of the chapter from which our lesson is taken that Jesus was leaving Judaea, and was going to Galilee. Jesus had probably spent several months in Judaea. He went to Jerusalem for the passover feast, which was probably during the early part of April; and from his reference to the time of harvest in 4:35 it appears that he was making the trip through Samaria about the middle of December of that year. The harvest came about the middle of April, and counting back four months from that time would be about the middle of December.

Because of their intense dislike for the Samaritans, the Jews in traveling to and from Judaea and Galilee usually avoided passing through Samaria. This made it necessary for them to cross the Jordan and go up or down the eastern side of the river. But Jesus, for some reason, decided to take the shorter route and go through Samaria. The time of the arrival of Christ and his disciples at the well is given as the sixth hour. If Jewish time is meant, which is probable, then it was about noon; but if the reference is to Roman time, it would be close to six o'clock, probably in the evening.

John does not give many of the details about which we would like to know, but he does tell enough to give a fairly accurate picture of that which did happen. The fact that the

woman appears to have come alone to draw water strongly suggests that it was not the usual time for the women to come for that purpose. (Cf. Gen. 24: 10ff; Ex. 2: 16; I Sam. 9: 11.) This is one of the reasons for thinking that the time reference was probably Jewish. Some expositors are of the opinion that the moral character of the woman in question may have had something to do with her being alone. It is also possible that she may have been working in a nearby field, and came for a refreshing drink. The term "Samaria" refers to the country of that name, not to the city of Samaria which was some six or eight miles away from where she and Jesus were.

The record specifically says that Jesus was weary with his journey, and that he was sitting by the well. This is one of the many references in the New Testament to the humanity of Jesus. He was subject to the same fleshly infirmities which characterize all of us. Jesus opened the conversation with the woman by asking her for a drink of water. Johnson notes that it was the custom of the people of eastern lands to comply with a request for water cheerfully, even to strangers and enemies. (Cf. Matt. 10: 42.)

For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food. This is John's explanation as to why Jesus asked the woman for a drink, or, at least it furnished the occasion for his asking her. It is likely that the disciples and Jesus had vessels in their baggage which they could use for ob-

taining water, but if they did it is possible that the disciples had them with them.

The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) The woman was able in some way to recognize Jesus as a Jew, perhaps by his dress or speech, or both; and, knowing the feeling which the Jews had for the Samaritans, she was moved by her surprise to ask him why he would condescend to ask her for a drink. She evidently considered him as being a typical Jew. There is no reason for thinking that she meant to refuse him a drink of water. The fact that the disciples had gone into the city to buy food shows that the "dealings" referred to here applied primarily to social intercourse. McGarvey and Pendleton note that according to a later tradition, a Jew accepted no hospitality from a Samaritan, and considered that to eat his bread was as polluting as to eat swine flesh. But Jesus was not willing to manifest that kind of attitude toward those people. (Cf. Luke 10: 25-37.) The feeling which the Jews maintained toward the Samaritans will help to explain why it was necessary, when the gospel was preached to the Samaritans, to have apostolic approval in order to convince the Jews that the Samaritans were entitled to gospel privileges. (See Acts 8: 14-17.)

The Lord's Greater Blessing

(John 4: 10-14)

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The thought here hinges upon a misunderstanding, that is, a misunderstanding as to who was speaking to her. The woman looked upon the man before her as being simply one of the race of the Jews; it never entered her mind that he was the Messiah. The "gift of God" in the broad sense is Christ himself, see John 3: 16; 2 Cor. 9: 15; but it is possible that Jesus had in mind the gift which all believers were to receive when he was glorified. (See John 7: 37-39; cf. Acts 2: 38, 39.) "Living water" was frequently used

in the Old Testament as a metaphor for the divine activity which quickened men and brought spiritual blessings to them. (Cf. Jer. 2: 13; Zech. 14: 8.) And as already noted in John 7: 37-39, the reviving and regenerating effects of the Holy Spirit are likewise called living water. (Cf. Rev. 22: 17.)

Johnson observes that Jesus asked a favor in order to confer a greater one; he made a request in order to open up a conversation that would give him access to a heart. Barnes notes that this is one of the many instances in which Jesus took occasion from topics of common conversation to introduce religious discussion; and no one could do it more skillfully than he. It would be a good thing for all of us to study his method, and follow his example. One way to acquire the art is to have one's mind full of the subject, and to consider every person a prospect for religious instruction.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

The woman thought that Jesus was talking about literal water, and with that idea in her mind, she was, of course, not able to grasp the thought about which Jesus spoke. Many people today make the same mistake with reference to figurative language. The term "Sir" on the lips of this woman signified only an expression of respect. She did not understand Jesus to be divine in the sense that we do. The well, according to commentators, was about one hundred feet deep, and the woman, with that in mind, could not see where Christ could get the water about which he spoke, especially with no means of drawing it.

Her comparison of Jesus with Jacob may have indicated that she was beginning to wonder about the greatness of the man who spoke to her; and while she was slow to grasp that about which Jesus spoke, she did finally ask, "Can this be the Christ?" (See verse 29.) The woman's claim that the Samaritans were the descendants of Jacob was not entirely true, as was pointed out in the In-

trouction. Jesus himself classed them with the Gentiles (Matt. 10: 5, 6), and spoke of them as strangers or aliens (Luke 17: 18). Josephus says that when Alexander greatly honored the Jews, the Samaritans determined to profess themselves Jews; "for such is the disposition of the Samaritans, as we have already elsewhere declared, that when the Jews are in adversity, they deny that they are of kin to them, and then they confess the truth; but when they perceive that some good fortune hath befallen them, they immediately pretend to have communion with them, saying that they belong to them, and derive their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh." (P. 345.) The parcel of ground containing the well was given to Joseph by his father Jacob. (Cf. Gen. 33: 18, 19; Josh. 24: 32.) It is said that the well is "one of the most exactly identified sites in Old Testament Palestine." (*Harper's Bible Dictionary*, p. 300.)

Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life. Jesus made it plain to the woman by this statement that he was not talking about literal water, such as could be drawn from a well as she had come to do. His words seem to connect his thought with that which he expressed in John 7: 37-39: "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." This, as Johnson observes, is the water which not only satisfies the longings of the soul, but is the real elixir of life, and quickens it into new life that never ends. It is a beautiful figure, as McGarvey and Pendleton point out, of the joy in Christ. In heat, in cold, in drought, in shower; in prosperity, in adversity; it still springs up, cheering and re-

freshing the soul, and this unto all eternity.

A Question about Worship

(John 4: 20-26)

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. It is well to read the verses between this and the last section of our lesson. It is possible that the woman raised the question about worship in order to turn the attention of Jesus away from herself, and at the same time get some information regarding the famous controversy which had been going on between the Jews and her people.

"This mountain" was mount Gerizim, at the foot of which is Jacob's well. In referring to "our father," the woman was again reiterating her claim to the heritage of Jacob and his descendants. Those who are familiar with the Old Testament are aware of the fact that Jeroboam taught the northern kingdom to worship elsewhere than in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12: 25ff), and this probably set the precedent for the worship on Gerizim. When the Jews returned from Babylon to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, as already noted, the Samaritans offered to help; but when their offer was rejected they, under the leadership of Sanballat, built their own temple on mount Gerizim. This temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, in about 129 B.C., but the place remained holy, and to this day, according to Vincent, Robertson, et al, the Samaritans yearly celebrate the feast of the passover there.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. Thus, instead of entering into the controversy referred to by the woman, Jesus informed her that the time was rapidly approaching when neither place would be the accepted place of worship. (It might be noted here in passing that there are some controversies which are not worthy of the time and effort of the Lord's people.) On the question of the fact that the Samaritans worshipped that which they knew not, read Acts 17: 23.

Both the Samaritans in vulgar ignorance and the Athenians in their philosophic culture were guilty of worshipping the unknown. The reason why the Samaritans worshipped that which they knew not was because they rejected much of God's revelation to man. As already noted, they accepted only the five books of Moses, and so were ignorant of that great body of revelation contained in the prophets and the psalms. (See Luke 24: 44.) Salvation, both the Saviour and the instruction about what must be done in order to secure the desired blessing, is a matter of revelation. (Cf. Rom. 3: 1, 2; 9: 1-5.) No man, whether ignorant or cultured, can reject that which God has revealed and at the same time worship him acceptably.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The reason why people who worship God must worship him in spirit and truth is that God himself is Spirit, that is, omnipresent and cannot therefore be localized and worshipped in a material fashion. (Cf. 1 Kings 8: 27; Psalm 139: 7-10; Jer. 23: 23, 24; Acts 17: 26-28.) There was a time when men, according to divine revelation,

had to worship at certain places; but that was before revelation was complete.

Worship is not simply the performance of certain acts it is something which takes place in the heart—"the adoring reverence of the human spirit for the divine." Before there can be any true worship, therefore, the emotions must be aroused; and this is done by the knowledge of who and what God is and what he has done for us. When one has the proper feeling toward God, it always seeks an outward expression; and when one is properly instructed, the outward expression will conform to the revealed will of God. One worships in spirit when he has a spiritual sense of the object of his worship, and a spiritual communion with him; and he worships in truth when he is guided by the truth and is therefore free from false conceptions resulting from imperfect knowledge. True worship always includes a truthful conception of the object of worship; and this truthful conception can be gained only by learning the truth.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. This is the Lord's first recorded declaration that he is the Christ. (Cf. Matt. 11: 25, 26; John 7: 17.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What and where was the land of Samaria?

Who was a Samaritan, that is, what was his origin?

Under what circumstances were the new inhabitants of the land taught the Lord's will?

Why were the Jews and the Samaritans so hostile toward each other?

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

How did Jesus come to be in Samaria at the time of this lesson?

How long had he probably been in Judaea?

Give reasons for your answer.

What appeared to be unusual about Jesus' travelling through Samaria?

About what time of the day did he and the disciples reach Jacob's well? Give reasons for your answer.

In what way is the humanity of Jesus emphasized?

What appeared to be the common custom about giving one a drink of water?

Where were the disciples at this time?

What was the woman's reaction to the

Lord's request for a drink of water?

What "dealings" were referred to in verse 9?

The Lord's Greater Blessing

Upon what does the thought here hinge?

What gift of God did Jesus refer to?

What is the metaphorical meaning of "living water"?

What important use did Jesus make of his thirst for water?

What lesson should we learn from this?

What was the woman's reply to the Lord's statement about living water?

What mistake did the woman make about figurative language?

About how deep was Jacob's well?

Why did the woman compare Jesus with Jacob?

What appeared to be the Samaritan's general attitude toward the Jews?

What is known about the location of Jacob's well?

In what way did Jesus identify the water which he proposed to give?

To whom has that blessing been promised? and how is it obtained?

A Question about Worship

What was the woman's probable motive for asking about the place of worship?

To what mountain did she refer? and where was it located?
 How did that place become the seat of Samaritan worship?
 How is the place regarded by them today?
 Why didn't Jesus enter into the controversy about which the woman asked?
 What lesson should we learn from his example?
 In what sense did the Samaritans worship that which they knew not?
 How can the same be true of people today?
 Why were the Samaritans ignorant of the true worship?

In what sense is salvation of the Jews?
 How must people worship God today, if their worship is acceptable?
 What is the significance of "God is a Spirit"?
 How does one worship God in spirit?
 How does he worship in truth?
 What was the woman's reply to Jesus at this point?
 What did John explain the "Messiah" to mean?
 What open declaration did Christ make to the woman?

Lesson VII—November 13, 1960

MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES

Lesson Text

John 6: 1-14

1 After these things Je'-sus went away to the other side of the sea of Gal'i-lee, which is *the sea* of Ti-be'-ri-as.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.

3 And Je'-sus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.

5 Je'-sus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Si-

mon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?

10 Je'-sus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 Je'-sus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.

12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost.

13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten.

14 When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

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

Devotional Reading.—John 6: 25-40.

Daily Bible Readings

- November 7. M..... God Fed Israel in Wilderness (Ex. 16: 4-12)
- November 8. T..... Elijah Fed (1 Kings 17: 1-16)
- November 9. W. Living Bread from Heaven (John 6: 41-51)
- November 10. T..... Jesus' Explanation (John 6: 52-63)
- November 11. F..... Five Thousand Fed (Mark 6: 35-44)
- November 12. S..... Four Thousand Fed (Mark 8: 1-9)
- November 13. S..... God Our Provider (Psalm 107: 1-9)

Time.—A.D. 29.

Place.—Bethsaida, across the sea of Galilee from Capernaum.

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

Introduction

It has already been pointed out in this series of studies that this is the only recorded miracle of Jesus which is found in all four of the gospel narratives. (See Matt. 14: 13-21; Mark 6: 30-44; Luke 9: 10-17.) All of these records should be carefully read. It will be observed that Matthew places the feeding of the five thousand immediately after Jesus received the news of the beheading of John the Baptist. Mark also mentions that incident, and also the fact that the apostles reported to Jesus regarding the mission which they had just completed. "And the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart." (Mark 6: 30-32.)

Luke calls attention to Herod's perplexity regarding Jesus, and his effort to see him; and then mentions the fact that the disciples came to Jesus and gave their report concerning their mission. It is quite easy to see how all of these things could be mentioned at this time, when we take

into account the fact that the writers did not always endeavor to give a chronological account of the events in the life of Jesus. John gives no particular reason for their going "away to the other side of the sea of Galilee," but simply records the miracle as the occasion for the Lord's discourse on *The Bread of Life*. This was in keeping with the general plan followed by John throughout his narrative.

The place of the feeding of the five thousand was near Bethsaida. (See Luke 9: 10.) There is a difference of opinion regarding the identity of this Bethsaida. Many Bible students hold that there were two cities by that name, one east and one west of where the Jordan flows into the sea of Galilee. The one on the west side is generally regarded as being the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip (John 1: 44), while the one on the east side of the river was known as "Bethsaida Julias." (See map.) Thomson (*The Land and the Book*), Taylor (*The Miracles of Our Saviour*), and others are of the opinion that there was only one city by that name, with houses on both sides of the river. In any event, the feeding of the five thousand took place on the eastern side of the river, which would be northeast of the sea of Galilee.

The Golden Text

"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life" It has always been in the plan of God that life be sustained by food. We all understand this principle in the physical realm, and it is, of course, just as true in the spiritual. This golden text is taken from the Lord's discourse on *The Bread of Life* which followed the feeding of the five thousand. It was in this address that he discussed two of the great needs of life, namely, food and drink. It is utterly impossible for anyone to live the spiritual life by his own unaided powers. Prior to the time of this lesson, Jesus had said, "And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John 5: 40.) It is through Jesus that people have life, and the means of sustaining it. "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." (John 6:

27.) In discussing the importance of this spiritual food, Jesus said:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven: not as the fathers ate, and died; he that eateth this bread shall live for ever." (John 6: 53-58.)

To eat the flesh of the Son of God, and to drink his blood, is equivalent to partaking of the quality of his life and the benefits of his death; it is to

imbibe his spirit and be governed by his word. (Cf. John 6: 68.) Christianity has been defined as the reproduction of the life of Christ in the human heart and life; and that is the goal toward which every person who expects to go to heaven must strive.

The Text Explained

The Setting for the Miracle

(John 6: 1-4)

After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. The expression "After these things" is John's usual way of indicating the lapse of an undefined period of time. (Cf. 2: 12; 3: 22; 5: 1; 7: 1.) It is impossible to tell by the expression itself whether a long or short interval was intended. (Cf. 4: 43; 20: 26.) The last place mentioned in John's narrative was Jerusalem (5: 1), and that, of course, was not the base from which Jesus crossed over the sea of Galilee. But more on the time element further on in this study.

The sea over which Jesus and his disciples crossed was known by four names: (1) the sea of Chinnereth, Num. 34: 11; Deut. 3: 17; Josh. 13: 27, probably because of its lyre or harp-like shape; (2) the lake of Gennesaret, Luke 5: 1, the name of an extended plain on the northwestern bank of the lake; (3) the sea of Galilee, probably because of its relation to the province of Galilee; and (4) the sea of Tiberias. This name was probably from the city of the same name which Herod built on the shores of the lake and called it Tiberias in honor of the then reigning emperor Tiberius Caesar. This last name for the sea was perhaps best known to the Gentile readers of John's narrative. *Galilee* and *Tiberias* would be understood by all, both Jews and Gentiles.

And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick. As may be seen from the map, Jesus and the disciples crossed the northern end of the lake, and we learn from Matthew⁷ and Mark that the multitudes from the cities "followed him on foot" and "outwent them." This was during the Lord's third circuit of Galilee, and the people had had many opportunities to see the miracles which Christ had wrought in healing

If bread is the type of all earthly sustenance, then the bread of heaven may well stand for all that which is involved in spiritual sustenance; and it is not therefore surprising that Jesus would say, "I am the bread of life."

the sick. John has comparatively little to say about the ministry of Jesus in Galilee, notwithstanding the fact that the major part of his work and teaching was done in that province.

And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. The article before mountain—"the mountain"—probably indicates that John was referring to a well known mountain in that area. Johnson says that the mountains on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee rise to a height of nearly two thousand feet above the level of the water. The region was uninhabited, and was therefore an ideal place for rest and communion with his disciples.

Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. If, as many Bible students think, the feast of John 5: 1 was the passover, then the passover of the lesson now before us was the third in the ministry of Jesus. (See 2: 13.) This also means that there was almost a year between the events of chapter 5 and those of this lesson. There is no indication that Jesus attended this passover, no doubt because of the hostility of the Jews. (Cf. chapter 5 and 7: 1.) As pointed out in an earlier lesson, John explained for his Gentile readers that the passover was a feast of the Jews. This particular passover was held near the middle of April, probably on the 16th or 17th, A.D. 29; and the fact that it was at hand would suggest that the time of this lesson was not far from the first of the month. It appears that the caravans were already forming for the journey to Jerusalem where the feast was celebrated.

Sympathy, Hunger, and Helplessness

(John 6: 5-9)

Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what

he would do. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all mention the fact that Jesus healed the sick among the people who came to him on this occasion, a matter which John passes over entirely. Mark also notes the Lord's sympathy for the multitude. "And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." It is necessary to keep all these things in mind, as we endeavor to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between John and the Synoptists.

It appears that John pictures Jesus upon the mountain with his disciples, as he beheld the multitude "coming" unto him; and it seems to have been *then* that Jesus addressed his words to Philip regarding the matter of feeding the people. But later on in the day, after he had spent the time in teaching the people and healing their sick, it was the disciples themselves who raised the question about food for the hungry. "And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent; send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat." (Mark 6: 35, 36.) With this view of the matter, it was Jesus who raised the question of food for the people, when he saw them coming; and then near the close of the day, after the people had been with him for sometime, it was the disciples who took the initiative and asked Jesus to send the multitude away.

Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings⁹ worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. Nothing is said in the record about why Jesus singled out Philip regarding this question, and it may be true, as Alford suggests, that Philip was nearest to Jesus at the moment, and he wanted to see where the disciples would turn in their helplessness. He left the thought in their minds all day long, and the estimate which Philip gave was evidently to them a staggering amount. A "shilling," according to the marginal reading, was worth nearly seventeen cents, and was the price generally paid to a laborer for a day's work.

(See Matt. 20: 2.) Two hundred shillings, therefore, would amount to a little more than thirty dollars. (Cf. Mark 6: 37.) From the manner in which the disciples spoke of this amount, it seems quite evident that they did not possess that much, or, at least, they considered the question out of reason.

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many? Various Bible students have pointed out the fact that "barley" indicated an inferior type of bread. Vincent says that Pliny and some Jewish writers describe it as food fit for beasts. The fish were probably small, dried or pickled, and the entire amount, five barley loaves, and two fishes, were intended for the boy's lunch. The disciples were clearly alarmed at the situation. They saw the crowd, the darkness, the distance, and the danger; but they forgot the only thing they should have thought of—their Lord! (Cf. Matt. 16: 5-12.)

The principle contained in this lesson involves one of the major problems of our day. We look at the deplorable condition of our race and that which needs to be done for its betterment, to say nothing of the glory of God; and then looking at ourselves, one by one, we exclaim, What can we do! And if we see a little help available, we immediately ask, But what is this among so many? The Lord, however, is not helpless, and if we will take our problem to him, and trust him to multiply our efforts, great things can be accomplished.

The Miracle and Its Result

(John 6: 10-14)

Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Mark says that they sat "upon the green grass." It was the spring of the year, as already noted, being near the pass-over season, and the entire countryside must have been suited for the occasion. The fact that "green grass" was there shows that the term "desert," as used by the Synoptists, does not mean an arid waste. The country was merely uninhabited. "Much grass" suggests that there were comfortable

places to sit, even for so large a number. Mark, Luke, and John mention only the men, whereas, Matthew says that there were about five thousand men, "besides women and children."

John does not say anything about the sitting arrangement, but we learn from the other writers that they sat in companies or ranks, "by hundreds, and by fifties." McGarvey and Pendleton point out that this arrangement had several advantages. It saved the apostles much time and labor in distributing the food; it would make it easy to count the number who were fed; it would insure that each one would receive his portion; and it would make certain that the reality of the miracle could not be questioned.

Jesus therefore took the loaves and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would. Where John says that Christ gave thanks for the food which he had in his hands, the other three say that he blessed it; and where John says that Christ distributed the food to the people who were seated, the others say that he gave it to the disciples, and they in turn gave it to the waiting multitude. Jesus blessed the loaves and fishes by giving thanks, and vice versa. It is said that the Jews held that anyone who ate without first giving thanks acted as if he stole the food. Jesus always gave thanks for the food which he ate (cf. Luke 24: 30), and the New Testament plainly teaches that such is the will of God for all of his people. (See 1 Tim. 4: 3-5.) Christ, of course, distributed the food to the people through the hands of his disciples. (Cf. John 4: 1, 2.)

And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost. So they gathered

them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten. Only Mark mentions the gathering up of the broken pieces of the fishes, and only John records the Lord's command to gather up that which remained over after the multitude had eaten, and the reason for it, namely, "that nothing be lost." The same power which multiplies the seed which the farmer puts into the ground, multiplied the loaves and the fishes; and the same reason for not wasting that which God makes possible for his people is equally applicable in both instances.

It should be observed that the "broken pieces" were not the *scraps* which the people had thrown away, but the unused pieces which had not as yet been touched by the people. There was one small amount of edible food before Jesus performed the miracle; but there were twelve baskets of the same type of food after the multitude had eaten to complete satisfaction. The original word for "basket" in this instance is *kophinos*, which has been defined as a "wicker travelling basket," whereas, the term for basket in the case of the four thousand is *spurts*, that is, a hamper, large enough for a man to get into. (Cf. 2 Cor. 11: 33.)

When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world. The prophet referred to was the one about whom Moses spoke in Deut. 18: 15-19, and about whom the delegation from Jerusalem asked in John 1: 21. Jesus was indeed the prophet (cf. Acts 3: 22, 23), but the Jews had some grave misconceptions regarding him. They expected him to be a political ruler here upon the earth, and they were then ready to "take him by force, to make him king." (John 6: 15.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What peculiarity attaches itself to the miracle we are to study today?
How did Jesus come to perform it?
Why did he and his disciples withdraw to the desert place?
What particular use did John make of this miracle?

Give some indication as to the place of the miracle.

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak these words?
How is food related to life in the plan of God?
What did Jesus mean by saying that he is the bread of life?
What does it mean for one to eat his flesh and drink his blood?
How, then, does one appropriate the bread of life which Jesus supplies?

The Setting for the Miracle

What did John mean by saying, "After these things"?
Why did John refer to the sea as both the sea of Galilee, and Tiberias?
By what other names was this body of water known? and why?
Why did the multitude follow after Jesus? and what was their mode of travel?
At what time in the Lord's ministry was this?
Where did Jesus and his disciples go at first?
What note of time does John mention here?
Which passover was this?

Sympathy, Hunger, and Helplessness

How was Jesus affected by the sight of the multitude? and why?
What question did he ask Philip? and why?
How reconcile this with the fact that the disciples themselves raised the question about food for the people?
What reply did Philip make to the Lord's question?
What was a shilling? and why did it mean so much to them?
In what way was food brought to the attention of Jesus?
What was Andrew's reaction to the amount which was available?

What important thing did the disciples forget at this time?
What lesson should we learn from their experience?

The Miracle and Its Result

What is said about the condition of the place where they were?
Why was it called a desert?
How many people were present who needed food?
In what way were they seated?
What were the advantages of this arrangement?
What did Jesus do before preparing the food for the people?
Why is the giving of thanks so important for God's people always?
How was the food distributed to the people?
Why did Jesus command the disciples to take up the broken pieces?
What was meant by the "broken pieces"?
What lesson should we learn from this?
What kind of baskets did they fill with the remaining pieces?
What was the reaction of the people to the miracle?
What prophet did they have reference to?
What were their expectations regarding this prophet?
What application did Peter make of Moses' prediction?

Lesson VIII—November 20, 1960

JESUS WALKS UPON THE SEA

Lesson Text

John 6: 15-24

15 Je'-sus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

16 And when evening came, his disciples went down unto the sea;

17 And they entered into a boat, and were going over the sea unto Cap-er'-na-um. And it was now dark, and Je'-sus had not yet come to them.

18 And the sea was rising by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 When therefore they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they behold Je'-sus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 They were willing therefore to receive him into the boat: and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going.

22 On the morrow the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, save one, and that Je'-sus entered not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples went away alone.

23 (Howbeit there came boats from Ti-be'-ri-as nigh unto the place where they ate the bread after i:he Lord had given thanks):

24 When the multitude therefore saw that Je'-sus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the boats, and came to Cap-er'-na-um, seeking Je'-sus.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But he saith unto them, It is I: be not afraid " (John 6: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 14: 22, 23.

Daily Bible Readings

- November 14. M.....Peter and the Sea (Mark 14: 22-23)
November 15. T.....Jesus and His Disciples (Mark 6: 45-50)
November 16. W.....The Psalmist Writes of the Sea (Psalm 107: 23-30)

November 17. T. Disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21: 1-7)
 November 18. F. Israelites Passed through the Sea (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)
 November 19. S.....Jonah and the Sea (Jonah 1: 4-15)
 November 20. S..... No More Sea (Rev. 21: 1-5)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—The sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

This lesson is so closely connected with the last lesson that a part of this introduction may seem repetitious. Jesus, upon seeing the multitude coming to him, descended from the mountain, taught them, healed their sick, and then fed them with the five loaves and the two fishes. The miracle aroused in them such a degree of enthusiasm that they were ready to take Jesus by force, and make him king. This attitude on their part grew out of their misconceptions regarding the promised Messiah. They thought that he was to be an earthly ruler, and that his reign in Jerusalem would serve to break the Homan yoke, and thereby free them of servitude to a foreign power. It is understandable therefore that with this idea in their minds, and with their hope for freedom, they were ready to act, and especially so since they had such a large crowd present. When once the word was spread abroad, they no doubt reasoned, the entire nation would rise up as one man, and their fondest hopes would soon be realized.

When Jesus saw the situation developing, and knew what the people wanted to do, he took immediate steps to remove himself from the

scene of action. He constrained his disciples to get into the boat and start across the lake, while he sent the multitude away. (See Mark 6: 45.) After this was done, Jesus himself went back up into the mountain to pray. Although Jesus was God's Son, he was subject to temptation (Heb. 4: 15), and the efforts of the huge multitude to make him king would most likely present a real temptation to Jesus. Prayer is one of the most effective ways of overcoming temptation. (Cf. Matt. 26: 41.)

But the journey across the lake that night was destined to place the disciples in a situation which would ultimately increase their faith. The accounts of their experience are recorded, in addition to John, by Matthew and Mark. These records should be read before entering into this study. (See Matt. 14: 22-33; Mark 6: 45-52.) Luke does not mention this incident, and only Matthew tells of Peter's attempt to walk on the water, as he saw Jesus doing. All in all, it was a night never to be forgotten by the disciples, and their recorded experiences are such as to make interesting and profitable reading for all who delight in the narratives of the ministry of Jesus.

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson, being a part of the regular text, will be considered in due order.

The Text Explained

Forces of Opposition

(John 6: 15-18)

Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

One of the sad and unfortunate facts connected with the ministry of Jesus, both then and now, is the frequent frustration of his plans to help those who come under his influence. In the case now before us. Jesus had de-

scended from the place where he had sought rest for himself and his disciples, and had come down on the plain to minister to the multitude, to heal their sick, and to teach them the will of God. But before the day was over, the people had reached the point where they were ready to force him to become something which was wholly contrary to God's will, both for him and for them.

But efforts after this fashion did

not stop with the people of Christ's day here upon the earth; multitudes are still trying to force him to do many things which are foreign to God's revealed will for men today. Although Jesus is no longer here in person, but he is still trying to do that which is good for men. He has revealed a plan whereby people can be brought into harmony with the will of God, and be saved eternally in the world to come, but that does not suit the majority of men now. They want him to sponsor their way of thinking, and endorse that which they want done. But now, as then, Jesus, as it were, withdraws himself from them for he is "the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever."

And when evening came, his disciples went down unto the sea; and they entered into a boat, and were going over the sea unto Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. It is well for us to be reminded frequently that John omits many of the details which are supplied by the other writers. John's purpose seems to have been to give the principal facts and then make them the basis or the background for the discourses which he records. John does not tell why the "And straightway he constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away. And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone." (Matt. 14: 22, 23; cf. Mark 6: 45, 46.)

While there is nothing in the record which specifically says so, it is possible that Jesus sent the disciples away, in order to keep them from being influenced by the mistaken Messianic enthusiasm of the crowds. (Cf. Gal. 2: 11-13.) The term "constrain" shows that the disciples were doing that which they had been commanded to do. The implication is that they were not very anxious at first to get into the boat. Thayer says that the word *constrain* means to compel, necessitate, drive to, etc.

John says that the disciples "were going over the sea unto Capernaum," whereas, Mark says that Christ constrained them "to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other

side of Bethsaida, while he himself sendeth the multitude away." Bethsaida was between the place where they entered the boat and Capernaum; and it is very probable that Jesus had instructed them to stop at Bethsaida and take him into the boat, he himself intending to walk on the land that far. (Cf. Acts 20: 13.) John was simply speaking of the completed journey, while Mark was filling in the details.

None of the gospel narrators indicates that Jesus told his disciples that he was going up into the mountain to pray. Mark says, "And after he had taken leave of them, he departed into the mountain to pray," while Matthew notes that "after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone." This would account for the statement by John, "And it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them." Trench suggests that Jesus probably wanted the disciples to learn to have confidence in his ever-ready help, and not simply cling only to the sense of his bodily presence.

And the sea was rising by reason of a great wind that blew. While Jesus was engaged in prayer, his disciples were contending with a furious storm, such as was not uncommon on the sea of Galilee. The surface of that sea is 682 feet below sea level, and the water courses on the banks had cut out deep ravines which acted like great funnels in drawing down the cold winds from the mountains; so that the storms were often both sudden and severe. At the time of this lesson, the wind came down with such fury that even strong and experienced rowers, such as the fishermen-apostles, were able to make but little headway against it.

A Lesson in Trust

(John 6: 19-21)

When therefore they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they behold Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat: and they were afraid. Matthew and Mark tell us that it was the fourth watch of the night when they saw Jesus walking upon the water. That means that they had been rowing for approximately nine hours,

and had not gone more than three or three and a half miles, which was about half way across the sea. Both Matthew and Mark say that the disciples thought that they saw a ghost, and cried out with fear. Mark further notes that Jesus would have passed them by. This suggests that their fears would probably have been greater, if Jesus had walked on up to the ship. Mark's full statement is very graphic: "And seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea; and he would have passed by them: but they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw him, and were troubled."

Some students have endeavored to show that Jesus did not actually walk upon the water. Their contention is based upon what they regard as the correct rendering of the preposition "on" in the expression "they behold Jesus walking on the sea." Barrett notes that *epi* (on) with the genitive could be translated "by the sea"; that is, Jesus walked on the shore, or in the shallow water on the beach. He then goes on to say that if this translation were adopted the narrative would contain no miracle, and adds that there can be little doubt that both Mark and John intended to record a miracle. Alford observes that the expression can have no other meaning here, than that the Lord *walked bodily on the surface of* the water. He then cites Job 9: 8 to confirm his conclusion.

It is easy for us, who observe the scene from a distance, to understand why the disciples were afraid when they saw Jesus coming toward them: but all of that is history now. What we need to do is to ask, What meaning does it have for us today. Jesus, of course, will not come to us in a literal sense, but he does often come to us in a way which makes us dread rather than welcome his approach. For example, he sometimes comes demanding that we give up certain sins or so-called pleasures which we don't want to give up. And, too, he sometimes comes asking for service which we do not want to render. A careful consideration of these facts should help us to see something of what our

attitude toward him is. (Cf. Luke 14: 25-35.)

But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Mark says, "But he straightway spake with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." The disciples must have recognized the voice of their Master. (Cf. Gen. 27: 22; 1 Sam. 26: 17; Acts 12: 14.) Johnson calls this the gospel message of peace, on the simple ground that "It is I." Christ's presence is always peace to the soul which delights to serve him. It appears that the expression "It is I" is equivalent to "*I am*," that is, the Almighty One who made the wind and the waves, who rules them, and whom they obey. (Cf. Ex. 3: 14; John 8: 58.)

The experience through which the disciples passed during their night on the sea was the one which Trench referred to when he said that Jesus did not want his followers to cling *only* to the sense of his bodily presence, as ivy which always needs an outward support. Instead, he wanted them to be like the sturdy oak which can withstand a mighty storm. Although the disciples were in great difficulty and danger, it should be noted that Jesus came to them before their powers were exhausted, and showed them that they can always place their confidence in his ever-ready help. Christ will always calm the fears and aid anyone who will put his trust in him, or, which is the same thing, who will listen to his word. The next verse shows that the disciples did just that.

They were willing therefore to receive him into the boat: and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going. John does not say that Christ actually entered the boat, but only that the disciples were *willing* to receive him into the vessel. It would be natural, of course, to assume that he did enter the boat, but, fortunately, we are not put to the necessity of making such an assumption; for both Matthew and Mark tell us that he did enter the boat. John alone says that they reached the land whither they were going. The term "straightway" does not necessarily imply another miracle, as would be the case if the boat reached the shore simultaneously with the Lord's entering the vessel. The same word, both in its original form and in English, is

found in Matt. 13: 5, where the idea is that only a short time elapsed before the seed sprang up. With this thought in mind, it appears that the remainder of the journey across the sea was without further hindrance and took only a short time. (Cf. Psalm 107: 23-30.)

This view seems to be confirmed by the statements of Matthew and Mark. "And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore." (Mark 6: 53; cf. Matt. 14: 34.) Gennesaret was a narrow strip of land on the western side of the sea of Galilee, some three miles long, and a little over a mile wide. Capernaum was in the northern edge of it. According to John (6: 17) the intended destiny of the disciples was Capernaum, but Matthew and Mark say that the boat landed in Gennesaret, which probably suggests that they went ashore some distance south of Capernaum, because the storm had veered them out of their usual course. But be that as it may, anywhere they might land in Gennesaret would not be far from Capernaum. (Cf. John's "the land whither they were going.")

Seeking for Jesus

(John 6: 22-24)

On the morrow the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, save one, and that Jesus entered not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples went away alone (howbeit there came boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks): when the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. This lengthy sentence is recognized by all serious Bible students as not only containing a very greatly condensed statement of what happened the next day, but also a very complicated statement. Its probable explanation seems to be as follows.

Jesus, as we have already seen, sent his disciples away while he himself remained to disperse the multitude. After spending sometime in the mountain alone with his Father in prayer, Jesus rejoined his disciples, and they went on to Gennesaret and Capernaum. But the next morning

the multitude apparently reassembled, or at least a large part of them, and were standing at or near the place of the disciples' embarkation. They had noticed on the evening before that there was only one boat, the boat in which the disciples went away, and that Jesus did not go with them. (The fact that Jesus did not leave the place with his disciples may have caused the people to remain in that vicinity and reassemble the next morning, hoping to see him again.)

John next introduces a parenthetical statement to explain how the other boats came to be there, in which they rode to Capernaum, in their search for Jesus. These additional boats had come diagonally across the sea from Tiberias, or at least Tiberias was diagonally across the sea from where the people were. (See map.) Tiberias was built by Herod Antipas, on the shores of the lake, and was named in honor of Tiberius Caesar, the Roman emperor. It appears to have been the largest city on the sea, and was used by Herod as his capital. So far as the record goes, Jesus never visited that city.

We are not told why the boats came to the place "where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks," but McGarvey and Pendleton think that perhaps the "keen-eyed boatmen about Tiberias" saw the multitude on the other side of the lake, and "saw in their presence there an opportunity to earn a ferry fee, so they soon crossed the lake to accommodate the people." At any rate, when the boats arrived on the scene, the people did use them to go in search of Jesus.

The people who were there looking for Jesus evidently concluded that he was not in that area, or else his disciples would have returned in search of him; and since Capernaum was his home, it was natural for them to go there in the hope of finding him. They did find him, as the following verses show, and they asked him how he had reached the place. It was then that Jesus pointed out to the people the motive which had prompted them to seek for him, and delivered his discourse on *The Bread of Life*. It will also be helpful to us if we will endeavor to determine the motives which actuate us in our search for Christ.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

How is this lesson related to the preceding one?
Why would the people want to take Christ by force, and make him king?
Discuss the power of prayer in overcoming temptation.

Forces of Opposition

What effect did the attitude of the people have on the work of Christ for them?
Why is it that people who try such things can't see what they are doing?
What are some of the things that people today try to force Jesus to do?
What is the only safe plan for any one to follow as it respects Christ?
What does he always do when people try to force him to act contrary to God's will?
What is the value of studying the other narratives in connection with this one?
What probable reason did Jesus have for sending his disciples away?
What does the term "constrain" imply?
Why does John say that the disciples were going to Capernaum, while Mark says that they were going to Bethsaida?
Did the disciples know that Jesus was going to return to the mountain for prayer? Give reasons for your answer.
What was the condition of the sea that night?
What was the cause of such sudden and violent storms?

A Lesson in Trust

What kind of progress did the disciples make in their effort to cross the sea?

How were they affected when they saw Jesus walking upon the water?
Why did they suppose that they saw a ghost?
Why do some people try to deny that Jesus actually walked on the water?
What is your reaction to this?
What lesson is there in Christ's coming to them for us?
In what ways may Christ come to us today?
What should always be our attitude toward him when he does come?
How did Jesus calm the fear of his disciples?
What is the significance of the expression "It is I"?
What was the value of the experience of the disciples in the storm to them?
What was said of them following the words of Jesus to them?
What is the meaning of the expression "and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going"?
Where did they land?

Seeking for Jesus

What is the nature of John's statement of this section?
How did the multitude come to be at the beach the next morning?
What had they seen regarding the boats there?
What had they noticed regarding Jesus and his disciples?
What probably influenced the multitude in returning to the seashore?
How does John explain about the additional boats which came on the scene?
What and where was Tiberias?
How did the people get to Capernaum?
Why would they think of going there in search of Jesus?
What did they say when they found him? and what was the Lord's reply?

Lesson IX—November 27, 1960

FREEDOM THROUGH THE TRUTH

Lesson Text

John 8: 30-40

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

31 Je'-sus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, *then* are ye truly my disciples;

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

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

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

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

abideth for ever.

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

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed: yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you.

38 I speak the things which I have seen with *my* Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from *your* father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Je'-sus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8: 32.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 8: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

- November 21. M. Bondage of Sin (John 8: 31-36)
- November 22. T. Consequences of Sin (Matt. 24: 42-51)
- November 23. W. Sin’s Debasement (Isa. 28: 1-8)
- November 24. T. Quickened from Sin (Eph. 2: 1-10)
- November 25. F. Gospel, God’s Power (Rom. 1: 13-17)
- November 26. S. Freedom from Sin (Rom. 6: 1-11)
- November 27. S. True Freedom (Rom. 8: 1-10)

TIME.—A.D. 29

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and some believing Jews.

Introduction

Two of the greatest words of our language are united in the lesson which we are to study today, and it is probably true that no two words have been so variously interpreted. Rebellions and persecutions have claimed them, and the noblest deeds and sufferings have been identified with them. In the setting in which they are found in this study, they are used to throw light upon each other, and to guard against interpretations which might be given them, if they were each taken alone. Only truth can make one free in the true sense of that term; and genuine freedom is always based on truth.

If one will take the time to read chapters seven and eight of John’s record, he will see that Jesus left Galilee and came again to Jerusalem. This was during the feast of tabernacles. The Jews had been trying to kill him, and that accounted for his not going to Jerusalem openly. However, when he reached the city he was frequently found in the temple teaching the people. This resulted in a renewed effort to take him into custody, but the officers who were sent to arrest him were unable to do so; and they attributed their failure to the fact that “never man so spake.”

It was during these controversies with the Jews that the words of our lesson for today were spoken; and if these two chapters are carefully read, the lesson proper will be easier to understand and will be much more effective.

It is well to keep constantly in mind the fact that when John speaks of the “Jews” he usually has reference to the rulers among them. They were the ones who were so violent in their opposition to him. The controversy which was begun in chapter 7 is renewed after the incident regarding the adulterous woman (7:53-8:11). The first of the two sections which immediately precede our lesson text begins with the Lord’s pronouncement regarding his being the light of the world. This statement resulted in criticism from the Pharisees to the effect that he was bearing witness of himself, and that such witness was not trustworthy. This gave Christ the opportunity to teach them the truth regarding his origin, and the testimony of the Father regarding him. In the next paragraph (8: 21-29), Jesus continues his teaching regarding his origin and destiny, and in doing so, proclaims the fact that he is a revelation of God.

The Golden Text

This part of our study belongs to the lesson text, and will be considered in its proper place.

The Text Explained

The Promise of Freedom to Obedient Believers

(John 8: 30-32)

As he spake these things, many believed on him. “These things” were

the things which he had just said regarding his origin and destiny. (See verses 21-29.) Unlike other men, Jesus is not of this world, that is, he was not born as other men are. God

is his Father and he therefore owes his existence to no earthly man. And being the Son of God, he was going a way which no one else could follow; for he was going to a death for the redemption of sinful men, and to a glory which could never be shared by human beings. (Se Phil. 2: 5-11.) It is because of these things that Jesus was God's revelation to man, and he makes the specific claim that he taught that which God instructed him to say; and because of this he could always say, "And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him." (John 8: 29.)

In the light of such passages as Luke 4: 22 and John 7: 46, it is fair to assume that Jesus spoke his words of truth in such a manner as to convince many that he was a man of God, to say the least of it. It appears from this context that at least some of these believers were from among the rulers of the Jews, or from what might very correctly be called the Jewish hierarchy. "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God." (John 12: 42, 43.) But whatever may have been the degree of their faith in Jesus, it is evident from the instruction which he gave in the following verses that it needed to be raised to a higher level.

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. One abides in the word of Christ by making it the rule of his life, or, which is the same thing, by obeying that which the word enjoins. It was true then, as now, that faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (cf. Rom. 10: 17), and if one will abide, that is, remain, in that word his faith will continue to grow. In no other way can one be a true disciple of Jesus. And when one does as Christ here teaches, the result will be a greater knowledge of the truth and the freedom which comes from knowing the truth. Hendriksen notes that such knowledge, born of revelation and experience, sets one free.

That which Jesus said to those believing Jews shows that they needed further instruction. It reminds us of a similar situation in 2: 23-25: "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." The mere fact that one believes on Christ is not sufficient; for faith without works is dead. (James 2: 26.) If one is not willing to continue to learn and obey more of what Christ says all through his life, he will not prove to be a trustworthy disciple of the Lord. (Cf. 1 John 2: 3-6; 3: 24; James 2: 14-26; Matt. 7: 20.)

The term "therefore" in verse 31 shows the connection between those who "believed on him" and the freedom which truth affords. But even the truth itself cannot bring freedom to one who does not feel or realize the need for such a blessing. This is why it is so essential to increase our knowledge of God's word. The freedom which Christ offers to men is the fullest opportunity for them to be and to do the very best that is possible for them to be and to do; and when one sees this as a goal before him, he will look upon his old life as one of bondage. Again, freedom is perfect harmony between our souls and God's law. Christ is the embodiment of the truth which makes men free; and his teaching, accepted by the will and expressed in the life, is that which brings about the greatest blessing one can enjoy, namely genuine freedom.

The Need for Freedom Emphasized

(John 8: 33-36)

They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Many Bible students have assumed that the people who made the remark contained in the verse now before us were different from the believers in verse 30, but that is evidently an erroneous viewpoint, as may be seen by reading verse 36. These "believers" simply did not understand what real freedom is, and that is the reason why Jesus urged them to abide or

continue in his word. They were believers, but their faith needed to grow. Both Alford and Hendriksen affirm that the *believers* of verses 30, 31a are the same ones who maintained that they had never been in bondage. Alford: "The answerers are *those that believed*, not some others among the hearers, as many commentators have maintained." Hendriksen: "The people who answer Jesus are the same as those who have just been addressed (see John 8: 30, 31a).

The claim to be the seed of Abraham was the proudest boast the Jews could make, but John the Baptist had pointed out to them that the claim was worthless, unless their lives justified it. (See Matt. 3: 8-10.) When Christ spoke of the freedom which would come as the result of their having learned the truth, these "believers" changed their attitude toward him. They deeply resented the implication that they were in bondage, and were therefore in need of freedom. In saying that they had never been in bondage to any man, their evident meaning was *religious* bondage; for it is inconceivable that they could have forgotten the bondage of their fathers to Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Syria, and their present bondage to Rome.

But even their claim to religious freedom, if that is what they had in mind, was false; for much of their history from Egypt to Babylon had been marked by idolatry, some of it of the gravest sort; and the burden of the prophets, almost without exception, had been characterized by efforts to call them back from such bondage into the freedom and fellowship of God whom they had forsaken. But this attitude has always been true of God's people. They believe on him, but they do not seem to realize that they must continue steadfastly in the word of the Lord, if they are to enjoy the freedom which he has for them. (Cf. Acts 2: 42; 2 Pet. 3: 17, 18.) Many professed Christians today resent being told that they are not yet the kind of people they are capable of becoming. They do not like to admit that there is a possibility that sin still has dominion over them. (Cf. Rom. 6: 12-14.)

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that com-

mitteth sin is the bondservant of sin. This is one of the broadest and most remarkable saying which Jesus uttered. Its application is universal; no one is exempt. This is the kind of freedom about which he speaks. The present active participle indicates a continuous habit or practice of committing sin. Neither Jesus nor any other inspired person ever taught that it is possible for human beings to live without isolated acts of sin (cf. 1 John 1: 8); but they all teach that the man who constantly *misses the mark* of God's glory, and delights in that which he does, is definitely a transgressor of God's law. (Cf. 1 John 3: 4.) The awful tyranny of sin is evident when once it becomes the habit of life; and those who are so bound find it impossible to shake off the shackles—for example, vanity, envy, covetousness, ambition, temper, impatience, sensual indulgence, and the thousand things to which flesh is heir to. Freedom from this kind of life, let it be repeated, is what Jesus offers to his people.

Hendriksen observes that such a man as the Lord here describes is called a slave of sin. (Cf. Rom. 6: 16; 2 Pet. 2: 19.) A man like this is a slave because he has been overcome and taken captive by his master, sin, and he is unable to deliver himself from this bondage. He is as truly chained as is the prisoner with an iron chain around his ankle, the other end of which is cemented into the wall of the dungeon. Not only is he unable to break the chain, but every sin which he commits draws it tighter, until at last it crushes him completely. This is the picture of the people whom Jesus describes as sinners. The believing Jews to whom he spoke did not realize that they needed to be set free from such bondage; and that is the way it is with many professed believers in Christ today.

And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Jesus here turns from the figure of a slave bound in sin to that of a household, in which are to be found servants and sons, and the contrast is between these last two groups. The servant is not a permanent part of the household; he

may be sold, exchanged, or cast out. (Cf. Gen. 21: 10; Gal. 4: 21-31.) That was exactly what was about to happen to the Jewish nation; they were about to be cast out as unfaithful servants. (See Matt. 21: 33-43.) The old dispensation with its special privileges for the Jews was about to come to an end. But Abraham's true children (cf. Gal. 3: 29), will remain in the house and enjoy its privileges permanently. (Cf. Rom. 8: 1, 2; Heb. 3: 5, 6.)

The condition named in verse 36 shows that the responsibility for obtaining the freedom of Christ rests squarely upon the shoulders of the individual sinner. This freedom is called freedom *indeed*, because it is the freedom which God approves. The Son always acts in harmony with the will of the Father, and so to be set free by the Son is to be set free by God. (Cf. John 5: 30.)

Not the True Children of Abraham

(John 8: 37-40)

I know that ye are Abraham's seed, yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. Jesus, in this section of our lesson, is still speaking to those "Jews that had believed in him." He grants that they were the descendants of Abraham in a fleshly sense, but this relationship, which brought to them to many advantages (cf. Rom. 3: 1, 2; 9: 4, 5) only served to increase their own responsibility. (Cf. Amos 3: 2.) This fleshly relationship also served to emphasize their enormous sin in rejecting Christ. Jesus himself was the chief reason why the seed of Abraham was so carefully guarded through the years (cf. Gen. 12: 1-3; Gal. 3: 16; 4: 4), and now the very people through whom Christ came were his enemies! and the children of him who had looked forward with such anticipation to the coming of his Son (John 8: 56), were now seeking to kill him! Plots to murder Jesus had so filled the hearts and lives of the people who should have accepted him, as to leave no room for his word!

This is not the only time that Jesus spoke of the word of God being shut out of the hearts of men. "And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with

cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8: 14.) It is always in order for those who claim to believe Christ to search their hearts and see if the word which he speaks has free course in them. The case before us in this lesson is a concrete example of "believers" in Christ who refused further instruction which was essential to the growth of their faith.

I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. This verse is full of contrasts. Jesus *speaks* the things which he had *seen* with his Father, who is God. They were *doing* the things which they had *heard* from their father, who was the devil (John 8: 44). Jesus, over and over in the Book of John, affirms that his message came from God. "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; cf. 8: 28.)

They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham. In the preceding verse, Jesus made a distinction between his Father and their father; and while he did not tell them in plain words who their father was, they could see by implication that his reference to their father was not complimentary. But whatever may have been their thinking in response to his statement, they countered by affirming again that Abraham was their father. They probably meant to imply that he was their father in every sense of the word, both physically and spiritually; and with that in mind, it was as if they had said, We are spiritually free and have no need of the freedom about which you speak.

To this Jesus replied. If you are

(see marginal reading), as you claim, the children of Abraham, then you would be doing the works of Abraham. The idea is that children, having the nature of their father, imitate him; and so, if you were the children of Abraham, you would be manifesting the kind of faith, obedience, and uprightness which characterized him. But this is the very thing which you

are not doing, as may be seen in your seeking to kill me, for no other reason than that I told you the truth. Abraham was never guilty of anything like this, and this is enough to prove that your claim is a false one. Descent from Abraham, in the true sense of the term, cannot be proved by pedigree. (See Rom. 2: 28, 29; 9: 6, 7.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why are the two words of our subject so great?
Show some of the ways in which they have been interpreted and used.
How are they related to each other in this setting?
Relate the principal facts which immediately preceded this lesson.

The Promise of Freedom to Obedient Believers

In what way did Jesus differ from other men?
Why couldn't others go where he was going?
Upon what basis did Jesus say that God was with him?
What results followed his words to the people?
What did Jesus say to these "believing Jews"?
Why did he speak to them in that way?
How only can one be a true disciple of Jesus?
What does it mean to abide in his word?
Why would Jesus offer freedom to believers?
What is meant by "freedom"?
Why is it that truth can bring such freedom to the Lord's people?
What is the truth?

The Need for Freedom Emphasized

To what people did Jesus emphasize the need for freedom?
What claim did these people make? and why?
In what way only can such a claim be worthwhile?
Why did these people resent being told that they could be made free?
What did they mean by saying that they

had never been in bondage?
What facts show that their claim was a false one?
How is this same principle demonstrated by many professed Christians today?
What remarkable statement did Jesus make in reply to this?
What is the basic meaning of sin?
Is it possible for one to live completely apart from sin? Give reasons for your answer.
What are some of the evidences of the awful tyranny of sin?
Why is a sinner called the bondservant of sin?
Why are so many professed followers of Christ so indifferent to sin?
What lesson did Jesus teach regarding the servant and son in the house?
How did the position of the Jews magnify their sin?
Whose is the responsibility for obtaining the freedom Christ offers?
Why did Jesus say that if he freed them they would be freed indeed?

Not the True Children of Abraham

In what sense did Jesus say that he knew they were Abraham's seed?
What did this fleshly relationship serve to do for them?
Why didn't his word have free course in them?
In what other ways may the word of God be shut out of the hearts of men?
What contrast did Jesus draw between them and him?
To whom did Jesus attribute the word which he spoke?
What reply did they make to these words of Jesus?
What did they apparently mean by affirming again that Abraham was their father?
How did Jesus meet this affirmation?
How can one prove that he is a true child of Abraham?

Lesson X—December 4, 1960

JESUS AND THE MAN BORN BLIND

Lesson Text

John 9: 1-11

1 And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Rab'-bi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?

3 Je'-sus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the

night cometh, when no man can work.

5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Si-lo'-am (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbors therefore, and

they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am *he*.

10 They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered, The man that is called Je'-sus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Si-lo'-am, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight.

Golden Text.—*"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life"* (John 8: 12.)

Devotional Reading.—Rev. 19: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

November 28. M.....	Healing of the Blind Man (John 9: 1-12)
November 29. T.....	Criticism of the Pharisees (John 9: 13-23)
November 30. W.....	Testimony of Man Healed (John 9: 24-38)
December 1. T.....	Two Blind Men Healed (Matt. 29: 34)
December 2. F.....	Christ, Light of the World (John 8: 12-20)
December 3. S.....	Spiritual Blindness (Eph. 4: 17-24)
December 4. S.....	Sight Restored (2 Cor. 4: 1-6)

TIME.—A.D. 29

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, the man born blind, and others.

Introduction

Bible students are not all agreed as to when the miracle of this lesson was performed, but most of them are united in thinking that it was during the Lord's visit in Jerusalem, on the occasion of the feast of tabernacles, during which the events of chapters seven and eight took place. It is proper to say, however, that there are some who hold to the view that it was during the feast of dedication, some three months later (John 10: 22, 23), when the eyes of this man were opened. But this is hardly probable. As was observed in an earlier lesson, this is not an important question, but it is one of interest. It has been pointed out before that the casual mention of incidents, and the recording of relatively unimportant events, are sometimes helpful in establishing the general dates of Biblical records.

But assuming that the miracle now before us was performed during the Lord's stay in Jerusalem, when he went to the feast of tabernacles, the question arises, On which day? Many Bible students are of the opinion that the eighth and ninth chapters of John

constitute one unbroken narrative, and that the words which they record all belong to the same day. With this view of the question in mind, we should read the last verse of chapter eight and the first verse of chapter nine without a break. This is to say that as Jesus was leaving the place where the people were preparing to stone him, probably the temple, he saw a man who had been blind from his birth. (Cf. Acts 3: 1-3.)

Two objections have been registered against the viewpoint; and while they are formidable, they are not necessarily conclusive. The first holds that it is unlikely that the Jews would have tried to stone Jesus on the sabbath (the eyes of the blind man were opened on the sabbath day, see verse 14). But when people are filled with such hatred and rage as characterized those men, they are not too careful about what they do. The second objection contends that there was too much excitement for such a quiet scene as that which surrounded the miracle in question. But it is not at all improbable that John recorded this great contrast between

Jesus and the multitude in order to show his superiority over all other men. In the midst of such fury, Jesus was so completely composed as

to enable him to take note of a poor blind man, and stayed there until he had healed him. But whichever the day, the miracle was performed.

The Golden Text

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" These words were spoken by Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple. (See verse 20.) If the section regarding the adulterous woman (7: 53-8: 11), is a part of John's record, and we know of no valid reason for doubting it, then it is evident that the events of chapter eight took place on the day following the feast of tabernacles (see 7: 37, 53; 8: 1); and if chapter nine is a continuation of chapter eight, then the eyes of the blind man were opened on the same day. And if this is true, there may have been a deliberate design between the Lord's statement in the golden text and the enabling of the blind man to see.

It is a noticeable fact throughout the Book of John that the writer of the Fourth Gospel selected the miracles which he used, and recorded them in connection with a discourse which Jesus delivered, or a pronouncement which he made, such as the golden text now under consideration. The cure of the invalid at the pool of Bethesda (John 5: 1-9) gave rise to the Lord's remarks on the re-

lationship which exists between him and his Father. The feeding of the five thousand (John 6: 1-14) resulted in the discourse on the bread of life. And it appears that the pronouncement about Christ's being the light of the world was illustrated and emphasized by the giving of sight to the blind man. (See John 9: 39-41.)

The golden text for today should be read in connection with John's earlier statements regarding Christ as being the source of light for all men. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (1: 4.) "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world." (1: 9.) Insofar as its practical application is concerned, there are two things which light does for men, namely, (1) it enables them to see what is in the world; and (2) it guides them in the way that they should go. This is what Christ does for all men who will follow his lead. The text now before us is presented both negatively and positively. The people who follow Christ "shall not walk in the darkness," but they "shall have the light of life." Thus, they are not only led by the light; they have the light themselves. (Cf. Heb. 5: 14.)

The Text Explained

The Setting for the Miracle

(John 9: 1-5)

And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. Whether Jesus was actually leaving the people who were preparing to stone him, as suggested in the Introduction, or whether this was at a later time, the lesson is the same. Jesus saw a man who had never been able to see; and as it is pointed out later in the chapter, the man's neighbors and friends knew of this condition. There will therefore be no doubt about the miracle. Jesus frequently bestowed his blessings upon the sick and otherwise afflicted people, but here is a situation which he takes hold of without being asked to; for, as already suggested, it will not only benefit the man himself, but

will also serve to enforce that which he had said about his being the light of the world.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? It was a common belief among the Jews that sickness was the result of sin. This is one of the errors which the Book of Job sought to correct, but the idea still persisted, and Jesus endeavored to correct it more than once. (Cf. Matt. 9: 1-8.) Not only did many of the Jews hold to the belief that affliction was the result of sin; it appears that they also considered special suffering the result of specific sin. This seems to have been the basis for the question which the disciples asked Jesus. It is relatively easy to understand how

the parents could have been responsible for the blindness of their son, but as to how the man himself could be responsible is not quite so simple.

Many commentators think that in asking regarding the man's own sin as a possible reason for his blindness, the disciples may have had in mind the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which taught that people had previous existences before they were born into their present state. McGarvey and Pendleton state that "their question had reference to the doctrine of transmigration of souls, the man being regarded as possibly having sinned in some pre-existing state," but Taylor notes that "although the doctrine was accepted by some among the Jews at a much later date, I cannot find any trace of its being held by any in the Saviour's time, and therefore I cannot accept this explanation." He then quotes Stier's explanation as perhaps the best solution which has been offered: "Rabbi, who did sin? This man or—since that is impossible—his parents? that he was born blind?" With the idea of the transmigration of souls out, this is certainly more reasonable than to think that the infant sinned in the womb, as some professed to see in such passages as Gen. 25: 22-24 and Luke 1: 41-44. Hendriksen notes that some of the rabbis concluded from the statement in Genesis that Esau, while they were still in the womb, tried to kill Jacob!

Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. In giving this answer, Jesus did not say that sin does not sometimes cause afflictions (cf. John 5: 14), but what he did affirm is that sin did not cause this man to be born blind, that is, his blindness was not the result of his own personal sin, nor that of his parents. Jesus was not at this time interested in the *backward look* of his disciples, but in the *forward look* of the providence and glory of God. The affliction which this man suffered had come upon him as a part of God's plan for his life. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28.) The fact of suffering, as has already been noted, does not always presuppose sin on the part of the sufferer. (Cf. Job 4: 5-9; Isa. 53: 4-6.)

We must work the works of him

that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. While the disciples were asking, How did this man get in this condition? Jesus was proposing, What can we do for him? The terms "day" and "night" are used in a figurative sense, and it may have been that the waning of the day suggested the use of such language. Jesus was simply telling his disciples that they must do God's will while the opportunity for doing so presents itself; for the time is rapidly approaching when all such opportunities will be withdrawn. This remark was made only a few months before Christ died. (Cf. John 7: 33.) There is no record of Christ's having performed any miracles of healing after his resurrection from the dead.

When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. It seems quite apparent that this statement looks both ways—backward as a further elaboration of what he had just said in the previous verse, and forward as a key to the interpretation of what follows. What Jesus was about to do in giving sight to the blind is an illustration of the work which he is constantly doing as the light of the world. The immediate application was probably to the time of his earthly ministry. Phillips renders the passage in these words: "I am the world's light as long as I am in it."

The Miracle Performed

(John 9: 6, 7)

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing. We are not told why Jesus chose this particular method of giving sight to the blind man. Some commentators think that since the Jews regarded this method as having medicinal worth (cf. Mark 7: 33: 8: 23), but forbade its use on the sabbath, Jesus employed it to show them that their interpretation of the law of the sabbath was contrary to God's purpose regarding the day, and that he and his disciples were under no obligation to conform to their notions of the manner in which the day

should be observed. (Cf. Luke 13: 10-17; Mark 2: 27, 28.)

It is altogether possible that Jesus did not want to teach his critics a lesson, but there is evidently another and higher motive which prompted him to act as he did, namely, to induce the proper attitude of heart and mind for perfect obedience, that is, the type of submission which will endeavor to carry out a command which apparently has no connection with the end in view—in this case there was no end mentioned, so far as the record is concerned. According to this view, the clay had no more to do with the giving of sight to the blind man, than the waters of the Jordan did in cleansing Naaman from leprosy. In both instances the command was a test of obedience; and it was power from on high which effected the cure in each case. In the instance now before us, he who calls himself the light of the world was imparting light both to the body and the soul. (Cf. John 9: 35-38.)

The pool of Siloam was an open basin within the city of Jerusalem, and was supplied by water from a source without the city. According to Thomson, it was about fifty-three feet long, eighteen feet wide, and some twenty feet deep. It was probably to this pool, and the practice of drawing water in connection with the ceremonies on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, that Jesus had reference when he uttered his statement found in John 7: 37-39. For possible Old Testament references to this pool, see Neh. 3: 15; Isa. 8: 6; 2 Chron. 32: 1-30; 2 Kings 20: 20 probably give something of the origin of the pool and the tunnel which brought in the water. Many eminent Bible students hold that the term "Sent" refers to Christ himself as the light of the world and the one sent from God. It is refreshing to observe that the blind man rendered implicit obedience, and received his sight; and it is a noticeable fact that neither he nor the unsympathetic Pharisees thought that the clay or the water had anything to do with the cure, although both were present.

The Reaction Which Followed (John 9: 8-11)

The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was

a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he. This section of our lesson affords us a very interesting view of the workings of human nature. The blind beggar in question must have been well known, and certainly his neighbors, and they who had been accustomed to seeing him daily at his familiar post, should have no doubt about his identity. But there was a question in their minds. This was due, no doubt, to the slight change which his sight would produce in him, and the seeming impossibility of a man born blind having his normal vision. In their view of the matter, no man who was born without eye-sight could see as this man was doing; and so, regardless of how much the man before them might resemble the well-known blind beggar, the two must be different men! It is true that some of the people apparently had no doubt about his identity; but what should have been the final word regarding him was spoken by the man himself, namely, "I am he!" But even that failed to satisfy some.

All of this is a clear example of the influence of preconceived ideas, and the failure to listen to the testimony of him who said, I am the light of the world. This principle is just as true today as it was then. There are multitudes of people who refuse either to see or to accept anything in religion which is different from their own thinking with reference to it. They have their own views about such matters, and it makes no difference what results may be set before them, or what the word of God may say about such things, they are still unmoved, or at least in doubt about them. This should be a very important lesson to all of us, and it is one which should be kept before us until we are brought to realize its significance.

They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight. Granting that his statement, "I am he," had satisfied those who were inquiring about his identity (cf. verse 18), their next

question was with reference to the manner in which his eyes were opened. The *fact* that they were open could not be denied, but the "how" was wholly unknown to them; and it was natural therefore that they should ask, "How then were thine eyes opened?" The answer which the man who had been blind gave was both clear and concise; and the arguments which he made to the Jews who questioned his statement regarding the opening of his eyes, made further on in the chapter, show that he was no ordinary man. One statement which he made deserves special consideration. After being chided for his straightforward answer regarding what Jesus did for him, and mildly rebuking the Pharisees for refusing to believe him, he asked them if they would listen to him again, and would they become his disciples. This last question resulted in the dialogue contained in

verses 28-34, which everybody should read.

The response of the blind man to the words of Jesus is one of the clearest examples of implicit obedience on record. So far as the narrative itself is concerned, we have no evidence that the man in question even knew who Jesus was. No request was made that his eyes be opened; and when Jesus anointed his eyes with the clay, and told him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash, there is not the slightest indication that the blind man was told to expect anything, much less that his eyes would be opened. His attitude in the whole affair was the reverse of that of Naaman; and his example is one which any man will do well to imitate. And with all the teaching of the New Testament with reference to the blessings which the Lord has promised to bestow upon the obedient, why should anyone question any command which he has given?

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What is the general view of Bible students with reference to the time of this miracle?

What are the points of difference among them?

What is the profit of considering a question like this?

On what day of the Lord's visit in Jerusalem was the miracle probably performed? Give reasons for your answer.

What two objections are registered against the idea of its being immediately after Jesus left the temple?

The Golden Text

Where and under what conditions were these words spoken?

What use does John usually make of the miracles he records?

What connection, then, does the miracle of this lesson have with the golden text?

In what sense is Christ the light of the world?

What are two principal benefits of light?

The Setting for the Miracle

How did Jesus come in contact with the blind man?

What question did the disciples ask regarding him? and why?

If the man was born blind, how could his sin be responsible for it?

Give a reasonable solution to this question?

Under what conditions can anyone sin?

What reply did Jesus make to the question of the disciples?

What was the difference between the

viewpoint of the disciples and that of Jesus?

How could the man's blindness contribute to the works of God?

What lesson did Jesus then give about their responsibility?

What further statement did he make about his being the light of the world?

The Miracle Performed

What probable reasons did Jesus have for anointing the man's eyes, and sending him to the pool to wash?

In what did the healing actually consist?

Where and what was the pool of Siloam?

Did anyone there attribute the healing to the clay and water? Why?

The Reaction Which Followed

What particular view does this section of the lesson afford?

Why was there doubt in the mind of the former blind man's neighbors regarding his identity?

What lesson should we learn from their experience?

How do preconceived ideas usually affect human behavior?

Why are people so slow to see this effect and to learn its lesson?

What responsibility do mature Christians have in this respect?

What was the next question which the once blind man's neighbors asked him?

In what way did he answer them?

What trait did the man's answer demonstrate regarding him?

What important lesson did his conduct illustrate?

Why was this true?

Contrast his attitude with that of Naaman.

What evidence do we see of these two attitudes today?

Why should anyone want to question any commandment which the Lord gives?

Lesson XI—December 11, 1960

THE PHARISEES AND THE MAN BORN BLIND

Lesson Text

John 9: 13-18, 26-38

13 They bring to the Phar'-i-sees him that aforetime was blind.

14 Now it was the sabbath on the day when Je'-sus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Again therefore the Phar'-i-sees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see.

16 Some therefore of the Phar'-i-sees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.

17 They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.

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

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

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

22 And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Mo'-ses.

29 We know that God hath spoken unto Mó'-ses; but as for this man, we know not whence he is.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

37 Je'-sus said unto him. Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee.

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

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 42: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- December 5. M.....Critical Pharisees (Matt. 15: 1-9)
December 6. T..... Blindness Common (Mark 10: 46-52)
December 7. W.Work of Jesus, the Work of God (John 9: 1-4)
December 8. T.....Suffering in Flesh (2 Cor. 12: 7-10)
December 9. F.....Whole through Faith (Luke 17: 11-19)
December 10. S..... Christ the Light of the World (John 9: 39-41)
December 11. S..... Christ the Source of Light (Isa. 42: 1-7)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the man born blind, and the Pharisees.

Introduction

The Jewish race, at the time Jesus entered upon his public ministry, was so divided religiously as to make it

impossible for him to avoid conflict with religious leaders and escape criticism and censure. His work was

destined to be a struggle and a conflict from the very beginning, since he could not hope to agree with the various groups, or enlist and maintain their full cooperation. Jesus, of course, made no effort to exclude any group from his audience, or to evade any important question; and the efforts which he made to conceal himself were only for the purpose of protecting his own life, until he had finished his work and perfected his plans.

Looking at the question from the standpoint of religion, the Pharisees constituted the largest and most influential group of Jewish people in Palestine; and they were the people with whom Jesus most frequently came in contact. It is necessary, therefore, if one would have an adequate appreciation, as well as an accurate understanding, of Jesus and his work as a public teacher, to have at least a brief acquaintance with them. This information, at least enough for our present purpose, may be obtained from any good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia. We shall

give only a few brief words regarding them here.

The Pharisees were the outgrowth of the long conflict between the Jews and surrounding heathenism, from the Babylonian captivity and onward. The term "Pharisee" or *separated* probably came into use when those to whom it was applied withdrew themselves from the Sadducee court under John Hyrcanus (135-105 B.C.). It has been said that their original aim in daily life was to be as ceremonially pure as the priests were in the temple. But they, like many others, did not always maintain that high standard, as may be seen in the New Testament. The Pharisees in the days of Jesus were more or less under the influence of the scribes. This latter group was well versed in the law, and its members were its chief interpreters: they were the "lawyers" of the New Testament. The party which came to be known as the Pharisees seemed to have been neither politically nor socially prominent during their early days.

The Golden Text

"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." This statement was made by the former blind man when he was called before the Pharisees for the second time. His parents had been questioned by these Jewish leaders regarding the man who claimed to be their son, but they were afraid to give their testimony regarding the manner in which his eyes were opened. "His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but how he now seeth, we know not: or who opened his eyes, we know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself. These things said his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him." (Verses 20-23.)

After failing to obtain the desired information from his parents, the Pharisees, with the spirit and mechanics of inquisition, recalled the son. "So they called a second time the man that was blind, and said unto him. Give glory to God: we

know that this man is a sinner." (Verse 24.) It was then that the former blind man gave his baffling and irritating answer: "Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." The failure of the Pharisees to get any information from the parents had made their case even more difficult; for it left them without any excuse for saying that there had been no miracle at all. And if something is not done immediately, so they must have reasoned, it will be but a matter of time until this miracle will be linked with Jesus in the minds of all the people.

At this point, the Pharisees try another method of procedure: they try to overawe the man by their authority, and force him to deny that Christ had anything to do with the miracle. The expression "Give glory to God" seems to have been a formula they used when it was thought that an accused person was concealing the truth, or at least a part of it. (Cf. Josh. 7: 19; 1 Sam. 6: 5.) This is the view of many commentators. Vincent notes that when the phrase in

question was addressed to an offender, it implies that by some previous act or word he had done dishonor to God; and he is hereby called upon to repair the dishonor by speaking the truth. There are some who

hold that the Pharisees were willing to admit that the eyes of the blind had been opened, but that since Jesus was a sinner the act could not be attributed to him: so give the praise to God for the miracle.

The Text Explained

Examined by the Pharisees

(John 9: 13-18)

They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. The antecedent of "they" is found in verse 8: "The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime." Some of these people, at least, had been satisfied that a miracle had been performed, but it is possible that some were still in doubt. But at any rate, these are the people who brought the man to the Pharisees, to get their judgment regarding the case.

Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. That which was done on the sabbath was of far more importance to the Pharisees, if it violated their idea of observing the day, than what was done to the blind man. (See John 5: 1-18; Luke 13: 10-17.) This attitude alone was enough to prejudice the Pharisees against both the blind man and Jesus.

And again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see. The Pharisees, for the time being, appear to accept the fact that the man had received his sight; and so, passing over the information which the neighbors may have given them, they begin their inquiry by asking the man "how" he received his sight. The man gave them a straightforward answer. This was the information which the neighbors had obtained from the man, but it did not satisfy the Pharisees, at least, not all of them.

Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God. because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them. Those of the Pharisees who said that Jesus was not from God assumed that their ideas of the sabbath and its observance were correct, and, consequently, condemned anyone who acted contrary to them, regardless of what the

results may have been. It apparently never occurred to them that they might be in error themselves, and that a re-appraisal of their views was in order. But that same spirit prevails today. Some people simply assume that their views of the teaching of the Bible are correct, and do not hesitate to condemn as unsound any who act contrary to them.

But there are some who looked at the results which had been achieved. This was the spirit which characterized Nicodemus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 2.) These people correctly reasoned that a sinner could not do that which had been done to the blind man. They also saw that the man could see, no doubt had the testimony of the neighbors that he had been born blind, and now have the man's own statement as to what happened, so there was nothing else to do, if they would maintain their honesty, than to admit that the power of God had been exercised through "this man," and that he therefore had God's approval. It is a noticeable fact that those who were closest to Jesus did not deny his miracles. They sometimes attributed them to a power other than God, but they did not deny them. (Cf. Matt. 12: 22-24; Acts 4: 13-16.)

With these two points of view present, it is easy to see why there was a division among them. When prejudice becomes so rampant as to prevent people's seeing anything but their own preconceived ideas, there is bound to be a division, if honest people are around; and it is easy to see where the responsibility for the division lies.

They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet. This question was probably asked by both sides of the division, or by them jointly. From that which follows in the nar-

rative, it is fair to assume that the majority were against Jesus, and the question which was put to the man in their midst did not imply that they recognized that a miracle had been performed. It appears that they were willing, for the moment, to grant that Jesus had opened his eyes and wanted the views of the man himself regarding his benefactor. It is possible that the clause "in that he opened thine eyes" is elliptical, the full statement being, "seeing that you have declared that he opened thine eyes." A "prophet" indicates that he believed that Jesus was from God. (Cf. verse 33.)

The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they had called the parents of him that had received his sight. The "Jews" were the section of the Pharisees (verse 16) who were hostile to Jesus.

The Result of the Examination

(John 9: 26-34)

They said therefore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? The interview with the parents of the man who had been blind did not help the Pharisees any. In fact, it put them in a worse position—with their backs to the wall. Their next attempt appears to have been to interrogate the man again in an effort to throw him off his guard and cause him to contradict himself, or make some kind of a statement which would give them an opportunity to destroy his testimony. It is amazing to note the lengths to which some people will go in order to justify themselves in trying to maintain their *status quo*.

He answered them, I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples? These dignified inquisitors had met their match. This poor beggar was evidently growing impatient, and his reply was couched in the keenest irony. It is possible that he saw what their aim was, namely, to get him to say something which they could use against both him and Jesus; and so, he declined to repeat his previous statement and thereby showed them that he understood their sinister motive in questioning him by sarcastically asking them if they wanted to become his disciples. This gibe was

in direct contradiction to the attitude of his parents, and it is safe to assume that his victims never forgot it. The man who had been blind had steadfastly remained with the truth throughout all of his interrogations, and he was therefore on a solid foundation and his aim was accurate. In the words of Tennyson.

My good blade carves the casques of men,

My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten.
Because my heart is pure.

And they reviled him, and said, thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken unto Moses; but as for this man, we know not whence he is. When the former blind man asked the Pharisees if they *also* wanted to become his disciples, he implied that he was one, and that there were probably others. They were, of course, insulted and humiliated. A man who had sat in the streets and begged had defied both their authority and their dignity, and had held them up to ridicule; and their next resort was to abuse him—that is one of the meanings of the original term which is here rendered "reviled." Goodspeed says that "they sneered at him"; Moffatt, "they stormed at him"; while Phillips translates the expression, "they turned on him furiously."

It is noticeable throughout this narrative that the Pharisees refuse to speak the name of Jesus. They refer to him as "this man"; and it appears that they regarded the calling of one a disciple of Jesus as an insult, and so when they accused the former blind beggar of being one of his disciples, they considered that they were heaping contempt upon him. But with self-satisfied arrogance they referred to themselves as "disciples of Moses," but what they did not realize was that it was Moses who would condemn them. "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5: 45-47.) They "knew" that God had spoken unto Moses, but they did not know what Jehovah had said. (Cf. John 5: 39; Acts 3: 22-26.) In

saying that they did not know from whence Jesus was, they apparently meant that they did not know the source of his authority and power. (Cf. John 7: 27.)

The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. This must have been the most humiliating speech these proud and dignified Pharisees ever listened to. Here was a man who was that very day, a little while before he was speaking to them, begging on the streets; but now he stands before them, who were supposed to be his judges, and expounds theology to them with a far better understanding of the Scriptures than they had, even though they were the ones who "sit on Moses' seat." (See Matt. 23: 1, 2.)

The Pharisees had admitted their ignorance concerning Jesus, and the man who was doing the speaking took full advantage of the situation; and with biting sarcasm he reminded them that such an admission was nothing short of marvelous, in view of the fact that the evidence of the origin of Jesus was right before their eyes! He made the same argument to his critics that Nicodemus made to Jesus himself; and it was unanswerable. Verse 31 is sometimes used by people to prove that God will not hear the prayer of an alien sinner; but any thoughtful people can readily see that *alien* sinners were not under consideration.

They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. The humiliating defeat which the Pharisees had suffered drove them to employ the only weapon they could use successfully, namely, cast out the man who had

not only taught them, but who had completely routed them in argument. The audacity which the former blind man manifested must have filled the judges with utter disgust. Bible students are not agreed on whether they cast him out of the place in which they were meeting, or excommunicated him from the synagogue. (Cf. verse 22.) They may have done both.

Jesus Revealed Himself and Was Accepted

(John 9: 35-38)

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Jesus is not only interested in the physical well-being of people he is infinitely more interested in their souls. (Cf. Jesus as the good shepherd; Psalm 27: 10; Isa. 40: 11.) It is always the will of the Lord that his people grow in grace and knowledge and faith. (Cf. 2 Pet. 3: 18; 2 Cor. 10: 15.)

He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? The term "Lord" in this passage means just about what our word "Sir" indicates. The man who had been blind did not know that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. The form of his question shows that he regarded a knowledge of the Son of God as something beyond all hope or expectation.

And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. It is interesting to observe the progress which the faith of the once blind man made, as may be seen by reading verses 11, 17, 38. We can also see in the narrative now before us the manner in which faith grows. (Cf. Rom. 10: 17; John 20: 30, 31.) When the man learned that Jesus is God's Son, he confessed his faith in him and did him homage, which in this case appears to have been an act of reverence paid to a Divine Person. (See margin and cf. John 4: 20-24; 12: 20.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What was the condition of the Jewish race when Jesus began his ministry?

What effect did that have on his work?
Who were the Pharisees? Give some facts concerning them.

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

Examined by the Pharisees

Who brought the former blind man to the Pharisees? and why?
 Why did John mention the fact that the miracle was performed on the sabbath?
 What question did the Pharisees ask the man? and why?
 What can you say regarding the man's reply?
 What effect did this have on the Pharisees?
 Why would a division arise among them?
 How did the people of that day regard the miracles of Jesus?
 Why ask the former blind man his opinion of Jesus?
 What did he mean by saying that he was a "prophet"?
 Did all the Pharisees admit the fact of the miracle? Why?
 Why, then, ask the man the question?
 Who were the "Jews" of verse 18?

The Result of the Examination

Why did the Pharisees again ask the man about what Jesus did to him?
 What reply did he make? and why?
 What was the nature of this answer? and its effect on the judges?
 Why ask about becoming his disciples?
 Why were the words of the blind man so effective?

What is meant by saying that they "reviled" him?
 How did the Pharisees always refer to Jesus? and why?
 What benefit did they receive from being disciples of Moses?
 What was the "marvel" about which the blind man spoke?
 How must the address of the once blind man have affected his judges?
 What can you say of the force of the blind man's reasoning?
 What reply did the Jews make? and why?
 Out of what did they cast the blind man?

Jesus Revealed Himself and Was Accepted

Why did Jesus seek for the man after he was cast out?
 What is the Lord's attitude toward all such people?
 What question did Jesus ask the man? and why?
 What reply did the former blind man make? and why?
 How did Jesus reveal to him the fact that he is God's Son?
 Trace the growth and development of the blind man's faith.
 What was his reaction when he learned the truth about Jesus?

Lesson XII—December 18, 1960

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Lesson Text

John 10: 1-16

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

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

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

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

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

6 This parable spake Je-sus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Je-sus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man

enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Golden Text.—*"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want."* (Psalm 23:1.)
 Devotional Heading.—Psalm 23.

Daily Bible Readings

- December 12. M. Parable of Lost Sheep (Luke 15: 1-7)
- December 13. T. Parable of the Shepherd (John 10: 1-6)
- December 14. W. Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10: 7-18)
- December 15. F. To Be One Shepherd (Ezek. 37: 24-28)
- December 16. S. Flock Must Be Protected (Acts 20: 28-35)
- December 17. S. Flock to Be Fed (Isa. 40: 9-17)
- December 18. S. The Shepherd Psalm (Psalm 23)

Time.—A.D. 29.
 Place.—Jerusalem.
 Persons.—Jesus and the Pharisees.

Introduction

Inasmuch as Jesus in the text of our lesson for today represents himself as being the good shepherd, it will be helpful to us, in our effort to get the significance of the expression, to try to get before us something of the meaning of a shepherd, especially in Bible times and in oriental lands. Some of the characteristics of a good shepherd may be learned from references to them throughout the Bible. Isaiah pictures him as carrying the lambs in his bosom and gently leading those with their young. (Isa. 40: 11.) One of the beautiful passages of the Bible regarding the work of shepherds is Ezek. 34: 11-16, where Jehovah himself compares his care for Israel to that of a shepherd who endeavors to meet every need which the sheep has. The devotion of the shepherd to his flock is graphically set forth in the text now before us, even his willingness to die for the sheep.

We get the idea of the integrity of the shepherd from such passages as Psalm 78: 70-72. Shepherd-like, as David knew and practiced it, was characterized by both emotion and devotion. He loved his sheep, and he made every effort to see that no harm came to them. In Eastern

lands the shepherd lived with his sheep, and he was looked upon as the center of their unity, the guarantee of their security, and the pledge of their prosperity. Their condition, apart from him, was one of abject and pathetic helplessness. If for any reason he was taken from them, they were distressed and soon scattered; and were often found wandering and stumbling among the rocks, bleeding in the thorn-tangles, and fleeing in terror from the wolf, if he had not captured them.

It was for these reasons, and others which might be named, that the good shepherd never forsook his sheep. He accompanied them by day, and abode with them by night. (Cf. Luke 2:8.) When the morning came, he led them to their pasture; and when evening was approaching, he gathered them together and himself lay down in their midst. As he looked upon their still, white forms which were clustered about him in the darkness, his heart brimmed with a brooding tenderness as he thought of their love for each other. It was no wonder that a shepherd would give his life for those helpless creatures which depended upon him so completely, and trusted him so simply.

The Golden Text

"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want." This text is taken from one of the best-known and best-loved passages in the Old Testament. Its author was none other than David himself, the sweet singer of Israel whose earlier life had been spent with the sheep as their shepherd. It is doubtful if any other psalm of the people of God has such a hold upon

the imagination and heart of believers as the one from which this golden text is taken. No one can compute the influence which it has exerted over people of all conditions and circumstances. It has been compared to the nightingale which sweetly sings during many a mourner's night, and bids hope for the morning of joy; and to the lark which sings as it mounts,

and mounts as it sings, and is heard after it passes from sight. And so, after three thousand years have passed since this psalm was first sung, it is still treasured in more hearts than ever before, and is echoed by more lips, perhaps, than any other song.

Someone in giving a summary of the ministry of this psalm has said, The sorrowful have been cheered by it; the troubled have been led into peace; the prisoner has sung it in his dungeon and felt himself a captive no more; the pilgrim has been gladdened by it as he wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way, and found no city in which to dwell; the fainting soul has been refreshed by it, and enabled to mount up as on eagles' wings; doubts and fears and questionings of Providence, and forebodings of ill, and all the black brood of unbelief, have been chased away by it, like the shades of night by the day-star; it has been God's balm to the wounded spirit; it has strength-

ened God's people to bear the cross, and to suffer their lives to be guided by his will; it has been whispered by dying lips, as the last earthly utterance of faith and gratitude and hope, the prelude of the New Song in which there is no note of sorrow.

All of that which has just been said is but a faint picture of what it really means to have Jehovah as one's shepherd. David's general conclusion was "I shall not want." (Cf. Deut. 2: 7; 8: 7-10.) After stating the general conclusion, David then went on to itemize the various situations of life in which Jehovah was then and would in the future be with him. Paul sums up the same idea in these words, "And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 19; cf. Heb. 13: 5, 6.) It is no wonder that another psalmist could say, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah." (See Psalm 33: 10.)

The Text Explained

The Allegory of the Sheep-fold

(John 10: 1-6)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. It is very evident that the first twenty-one verses of chapter ten are directly connected with chapter nine. The expression "Verily, verily," is not used by John to introduce a new discourse, but simply connects what follows with that which has just been said. That which is said regarding the good shepherd grew out of the assumption on the part of the Pharisees that they were the only authorized leaders of the people of the Lord. Jesus, in the closing part of chapter 9, had charged them with being blind, and therefore unfit to be leaders or shepherds. (Cf. Matt. 15: 14.) He next sets before them the character of the true shepherd, and contrasts him with mere hirelings.

The fold of the sheep was usually a roofless enclosure in the open field, or in some suitable place, where the sheep could be protected at night. The wall around these enclosures was made of stone or some durable ma-

terial, and was sometimes surrounded by thornbushes. There was only one entrance, a door, through which the shepherd could enter. This door was closed to all unauthorized people, and it was only by climbing over the wall, they could get it. These unauthorized people are here described as (1) *thieves* (those who take the property of others by stealth and secrecy: and (2) *robbers* (those who seek to obtain the property of others by force and intimidation). They are placed in sharp contrast with the lawful shepherd.

The purpose of Jesus in this allegory was to contrast his own care for God's people with that which was manifested by the Pharisees who had just cast out the man who had told them the truth. The prophets of the Old Testament had freely predicted that false shepherds would arise to the injury of God's flock. (Cf. Ezek. 34: 1-10; Jer. 23: 1, 2; Zech. 11: 4, 5.) There were also predictions by the Lord's prophets of old to the effect that his sheep would be properly cared for. (See Jer. 23: 3, 4; Ezek. 34: 11-16; Isa. 40: 9-11.) The "door" in the passage now before us may be described as the *door of prophecy*; and inasmuch as Jesus came as the

prophets predicted that he would, he passed through the door and was the "shepherd of the sheep," and that made the others, such as the Pharisees to whom he spoke, thieves and robbers; for they had not passed through that door.

To *him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.* It appears that originally the shepherd remained with his sheep day and night, but when the "fold" was introduced that was not necessary. A person, probably an under-shepherd, was designated as the "door-keeper"; and it was his business to see that the door was kept closed to all unauthorized people. The door-keeper, of course, knew the shepherd, and would always open the door to him. It seems that in some instances the sheep of more than one shepherd were kept in the same fold, but the sheep of each shepherd knew his voice, and readily responded to it when they heard it. It was customary to give names to the sheep, after the fashion that we do now to horses, cows, dogs, etc. The practice implied an intimate relationship.

The "sheep-fold" represents the church, Christ is the shepherd, and the sheep are his followers. If the "porter" is meant to represent anyone, it would probably be God, since it is he who decides who shall enter through the door. The probability is, however, that the porter is only a part of the drapery of the allegory. There is, of course, nothing in the church which corresponds to the shepherd's leading his sheep out of the fold.

When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. It should be observed that the shepherd sees to it that "all" the sheep leave the fold, as he prepares to lead them out to pastures and watering-places. Not one is left behind. And when they are all ready to start, the shepherd goes before to lead the way to that which is best for the sheep for the day, and to protect them from danger. Jesus knows every road his followers must travel.

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

Thomson (*The Land and the Book*) says that this is not the fanciful costume of the allegory; it is simple fact. He further said that he had made the experiment often. Johnson tells of a traveler who told a Palestinian shepherd that it was his dress, rather than his voice, which his sheep recognized. The shepherd, of course, knew better; and so, in order to settle the point, he and the stranger exchanged clothing. The traveler, with the attire of the shepherd, called to the sheep, but they refused to follow him. But when the shepherd, with the clothes of the stranger on, called to them, they immediately responded to his voice.

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. The usual word for "parable" (*parabolē*) does not occur in the Book of John. The term which is here rendered "parable" is *paromia*. Its only occurrence outside of John is 2 Pet. 2: 22. Except for the use of "parable" (see margin) in the passage now before us, John has "dark sayings." (See John 16: 25, 29.) It can be seen from these facts that the parables of the Synoptists are different from the "dark sayings" or proverbs of John. The Book of John contains no parables in the usual meaning of that term.

We have referred to that which John says in this section of our lesson as an "allegory," rather than a *parable*. While there is a relation between the two terms; there is also a difference. A parable may be defined as "a narrative true to nature or to life, used for the purpose of conveying spiritual truth to the mind of the hearer." (Taylor.) Webster defines an allegory as a "veiled presentation, in a figurative story, of a meaning metaphorically implied but not expressly stated." This is what Taylor means when he says that an allegory denotes a figurative discourse or dark saying, in which more is meant than meets the ear, and in which much valuable though hidden meaning has been closely packed.

Both the allegory and the parable employ metaphorical language, but it appears that the former requires more explaining—more filling in of the details—than the latter. (Cf. Gal. 4: 21-31.) Vincent notes that a

chief difference between an allegory and a parable is this: In the case of a parable the thing which signifies and the thing signified are kept distinct and parallel throughout, while in the case of an allegory the qualities and properties of the thing which signifies are attributed to the thing signified, and the two are thus blended instead of being kept distinct and parallel. (Cf. the allegory of the vine and the branches, where Christ identifies himself with the figure, "I am the vine." (John 15: 1-8.)

"I Am the Door of the Sheep"

(John 10: 7-10)

Inasmuch as the Pharisees failed to understand the allegory which Christ just presented, he now proceeds to explain and amplify that which he had just spoken. In the first instance he called attention to the door through which the true shepherd himself entered into the sheep-fold, but here he speaks of himself as being the door through which the sheep must enter the fold, that is the church. (Cf. John 14: 6; Acts 4: 12.)

All that came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. The reference here seems to be false Messiahs and self-appointed leaders who endeavored to turn the people in the wrong direction. It is not necessary to single out particular persons who may have tried to steal the people for their own honor. It appears, rather, that Jesus was emphasizing the unique fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in himself, and in keeping with the framework of the allegory just spoken, the emphasis had to take this form.

I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture. This is a further amplification of the statement made in verse 7. Christ is himself the door, the saviour, and the provider for all the needs of his people. His words are still in the framework of the allegory of verses 1-5.

The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. This is a contrast of the motives and results of the two types of leadership which Jesus has just mentioned. One is

selfish and is characterized by theft, murder, and destruction, while the other is beneficent and results, not only in life, but all that can be desired in such a life. This principle can still be seen in operation today. (Cf. Matt. 7: 15, 16.) Anyone who tries to turn any person into any way, other than the one which Christ designates, is guilty of theft, murder, and destruction, in the truest sense of those terms.

"I Am the Good Shepherd"

(John 10: 11-16)

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. The repetition of the article in the original (I am *the* shepherd *the* good) would make the literal rendering thus, "I am the shepherd the good one." Just as the previous section pictures Jesus as the door, so this one portrays him as the shepherd. Both explain and amplify the figures used in the allegory which he presented. It was often necessary for the shepherd, in literal life, to give his life in order to defend and protect the sheep, and that, of course, is exactly what Jesus did.

He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them: he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. A hireling worked for the money involved, but it should be observed that the mere fact that he was paid for his work did not make him a hireling. The Bible emphasizes over and over that the laborer is worthy of his hire. The hireling whom Jesus condemns is one who has a selfish interest, and who would have no interest in the sheep at all, if it were not for the money he receives. And so, when danger arises, he thinks of himself and not the helpless sheep which have been intrusted to him. It would be difficult to picture selfish, religious leaders in a worse light. Such dastardly conduct will receive its due reward.

I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. The relationship which Christ sustains to his people (the sheep of his flock) is

in direct contrast with that manifested by the hireling. The mutual feeling between Christ and the church is based on knowledge and understanding; and it is analogous to and illustrated by the mutual knowledge which exists between the Father and the Son. (Cf. Matt. 11: 27.) And in further contrast between Christ and the hireling who leaves the sheep in the face of danger, Jesus laid down his life for them. This is a lesson which all elders should learn well. (Cf. Acts 20: 28-30; 1 Pet. 5: 1-4.)

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. This is one of the many instances throughout the ministry of Christ which picture him as the world's Redeemer, and not simply the Jewish Messiah. His flock (the church), accordingly, would include Gentiles as well as Jews. (Cf. John 11: 51, 52; 12: 32; Eph. 2: 14-18; Acts 2: 38, 39.)

Questions for Discussion

What is our subject for today?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, place, and persons.

What is the difference between a parable and an allegory?

Introduction

How can we prepare ourselves for a better understanding of this lesson?

What are some of the essential characteristics of a good shepherd?

Give a brief description of shepherd-life as David knew it.

Why was a true shepherd so willing to die for his sheep, if need be?

The Golden Text

Give the setting of this golden text.
Tell something of the influence of the Twenty-third Psalm.

Give a summary of what it has meant to people of all walks of life.

What confidence does one have if Jehovah is his shepherd?

The Allegory of the Sheep-fold

How is this lesson related to the preceding one?

Give a description of a sheep-fold in the days of Jesus.

Contrast the entrance of the shepherd with that of thieves and robbers.

Why did Jesus speak this allegory?

Tell something of the relation between the shepherd and the sheep.

What does the "sheep-fold" represent?

Describe the daily activities of the shepherd and the flock.

Why won't the sheep follow a stranger?

What does John call this form of discourse which Jesus employed?

"I Am the Door of the Sheep"

Why did Jesus further explain and amplify that which he had just said?

What is the difference between the "door" of verses 1 and 7?

What does Jesus mean by saying that he is the door of the sheep?

Who were the thieves and robbers who came before him?

What is said of those who enter the fold through Christ?

What is said of the motives and results of the coming of the thieves and Christ?

Show how this principle is still in operation today.

"I Am the Good Shepherd"

How is the shepherd described in this section by the two articles?

Why did Jesus speak of himself as the good shepherd? Cf. verse 2.

Who was a hireling? and what was his attitude toward the sheep? Why?

Is it possible for us to have hirelings today? Give reasons for your answer.

How does Christ describe the relationship which exists between him and his people?

Upon what is this mutual feeling based?

Why does Jesus repeat the fact that he would lay down his life for the sheep of his flock?

What lesson is found in this for elders?

Who are the "other sheep" about which Jesus spoke?

What did he say all his people were destined to become? How?

Lesson XIII—December 25, 1960

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION

Lesson Text

John 10: 22-30, 41, 42

22 And it was the feast of the dedication at Je-ru'-sa-lem:

23 It was winter; and Je'-sus was walking in the temple in Sol'-o-mon's porch.

24 The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense?

If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Je'-sus answered them, I told you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me.

26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.

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

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

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

30 I and the Father are one.

41 And many came unto him; and they said, John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true.

42 And many believed on him there.

Golden Text.—*"I and the Father are one."* (John 10: 30.)

Devotional Reading.—John 10: 31-40.

Daily Bible Readings

December 19.	M. Jesus and the Feast of the Tabernacles (John 7: 1-37)
December 20. T.....	Jesus and the Feast of the Passover (Luke 22: 1-17)
December 21. W.....	Paul and a Feast Day (Acts 18: 18-23)
December 22. T.....	Christ, Our Passover (1 Cor. 5: 1-13)
December 23. F.....	Christ's Work in "Jewry" (Luke 23: 1-5)
December 24. S.....	Opposition to Christ. (Matt. 22: 1-22)
December 25. S.....	Jesus and the Sadducees (Matt. 22: 23-33)

Time.—A.D. 29.

Places.—Jerusalem and beyond the Jordan.

Persons.—Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

Introduction

The events of the last two lessons of this quarter took place in Jerusalem during the feast of tabernacles, one of the three great annual feasts of the Jews which were authorized by Moses. (See Lev. 23; Deut. 16.) The Jewish month during which the feast of tabernacles was observed corresponded to the last part of our September and the first part of October; and since the feast began on the fifteenth day of the Jewish seventh month, the month in question, that would throw it to begin about the first of our October. The feast of dedication, which came in December and which was not authorized by the law of Moses, was the time of this lesson. Jesus probably spent the time between the two feasts in Judaea, or at least the most of it. (Cf. Luke 10: 1-13: 21.)

The feast of dedication grew out of a very sad, though dramatic experience through which the Jews passed during the period between the Old and New Testaments. This period began soon after they began to return to their homeland from the captivity in Babylon. The Babylonians who had taken the people of Judah into their country, that is, into the land of Babylon, had been driven from power, and had been succeeded by the Medo-Persians. It was during the time of the latter, known as the

Persian Period, that the Jews returned to Judaea. Later on the Persians were defeated by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and the time during their rule was known as the Grecian Period. When Alexander died, there was no man to succeed him who was strong enough to hold his vast empire together, and the result was that it was divided into four parts. The Jewish people were sandwiched between two of them, the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria. (See map.) Both of these governments sought to control Palestine, and it is said that within twenty-five years after the death of Alexander, Jerusalem changed hands seven times!

The Seleucids were finally victorious and assumed control of the little country of the Jews which had been the center of the conflict for so long; and it was during their rule that one of their kings, Antiochus Epiphanes, incurred the wrath of the Jews by appointing a high priest whom they would not accept. The struggle which thus began between the Jews and Antiochus resulted in the latter's plundering the temple in Jerusalem. In order to show his contempt for the faith of the Jews, he sacrificed a sow on the altar of burnt offerings, cooked the meat, and then poured the broth

over all the building. This, of course, rendered the temple unacceptable to the Jews. The famous Maccabees entered the fight, and after a long and terrible struggle, Judas and his army entered Jerusalem, cleaned up the temple, and restored the worship of Jehovah. The temple was rededi-

cated to the worship of God on December 25, 165 B.C., and the occasion was memorialized by "the feast of the dedication." This, as one would naturally think, became an important event in the national life of the Jewish people, and especially those in Palestine.

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is found in the main text, and it will be considered in its proper order.

The Text Explained

The Jews Again Question Jesus

(John 10: 22-24)

And it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem. This feast held annually for eight days, partook of the nature of both a religious and patriotic celebration. Unlike the three feasts which were authorized by the law of Moses, the feast of the dedication could be celebrated in cities and towns other than Jerusalem. As would be expected, the feast of the dedication was a joyous occasion for the Jewish people; for they felt that the last vestige of heathen pollution had been removed from the temple. During the course of the celebration houses and places of worship were lighted, and the people carried torches. Josephus (Ant. 12: 7-7) says, "And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us and that thence was the name given to that festival. (See I Macc. 4: 41-59; 2 Macc. 10: 1-8.)

It was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch. The mention of winter, which suggests cold and inclement weather, was probably made to explain why Jesus was walking in the covered colonnade which ran along the eastern side of the temple. The fact that Jesus was in Jerusalem during the time of the feast of the dedication does not necessarily mean that he entered into its observance as an active participant.

The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christy tell us plainly. In view of the attitude which the Jews manifested toward Christ when he did claim to be the Messiah causes

us to wonder why they wanted a plain answer at this time. The probable reason for the request at the feast of the dedication may have had a relation to their patriotic feeling at this particular season. Their memories regarding the deeds of the Maccabees which resulted in the period of Hebrew independence may have stirred their feelings; and since they expected the Christ (Messiah) to be a political ruler, this might be a good time to start the movement which would free them from the Roman rule. (Cf. John 6: 15.) Of course it could have been that they simply wanted a direct statement from him on the subject, so that their case against him would be unquestionable. (Cf. Mark 14: 60-65.)

The term "plainly" carries with it the idea of "in unmistakable language" or "in so many words." If one wonders why he had not told these people that he was the Christ, so that they would have had no further doubt about the question (cf. 4: 25, 26), the answer seems to be quite obvious, namely, their own frame of mind was not in condition to receive such information. As has already been pointed out, the Christ to these people meant a political ruler, and it was their conviction that when he came, he would lead them in rebellion against the Romans. So then, 11 Jesus had used the plain language which they requested, it would have been completely misunderstood. Those who take the time to read the Lord's conversation with the Samaritan woman will see that he did not make himself known to her as the Christ until after he had given her a lesson on the spiritual nature of religion.

Jesus is always willing to reveal himself to those who are prepared to receive the truth regarding him (cf.

Matt. 13: 10-17); but when the motive behind the inquiry is not pure, he does not always commit himself to them. (See John 7: 17; 2 Thess. 2: 8-12; cf. Ezek. 14: 1-5.) This should be carefully considered by every person; for unless we manifest the right attitude toward the Lord, we may be completely deceived in our thinking regarding him and his word.

The Lord's Reply
(John 10: 25-30)

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. Although Jesus had not used the very language which the Jews were then trying to get him to utter, he had, nevertheless, repeatedly told them that he was God's Son; and if they had understood the teaching of the Old Testament, they would have recognized that as such he was the Christ. (Cf. John 5: 18; 6: 29; 7: 37-44; 8: 12-20; 10: 7-18.) If the Jews had been willing to receive the words of Jesus with a desire to know their meaning, they would have known that he was the One for whom they were looking. (Cf. John 8: 37: 43.)

But not only had Jesus told the people who he was; he had also proved it. "But the witness I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5: 36.) His works, as Nicodemus had told him previously, proved that he had been sent of God; but these Jews believed neither his words nor his works.

But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. The fact that they were not the Lord's sheep was not the *cause*, but the *proof* that they did not hear him. Jesus, two or three months earlier, had given them a lesson on the good shepherd and his sheep, and now he applies the lesson to them. If these Jews had possessed the humble, trustful attitude of the Lord's disciples, he would have explained the matter to them, as they were able to receive it; but as it was, they were determined not to believe that which he taught. Their pride, prejudice, and erroneous ideas regarding the Christ made it impossible

for them to hear, that is, understand that which Jesus said.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. This is as if Jesus said, My sheep, in contrast with you, are not in doubt and suspense about me. They listen to what I say, and we have a mutual knowledge and affection which springs from our attitude toward each other.

It should be observed that his gift of eternal life to his people (sheep) is both present and continuous. There would be no point in saying that when they get to heaven and receive eternal life, they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. No enemy will have access to them there. The blessing about which he speaks is theirs here and now. The reference is not to the *duration* of life, but to its *quality*. Whether or not we shall live forever with Christ in heaven will not be settled until our earthly sojourn is over; and herein lies the significance of such passages as Tit. 1: 2; 3: 7; 1 John 2: 25. We can have eternal life in the sense of its quality now, without having it eternally; but when once we have reached the other side, there will be no further danger of losing our inheritance.

So then whatever hope of the future we may have, in the light of the teaching of the New Testament, depends upon our having in our life here an eternal quality. Transient things are always transient, here or anywhere. They cannot last. But eternal things are always eternal, here and everywhere. They cannot help but last. (Cf. Job 23: 10; 1 Cor. 3: 12-15; John 11: 25, 26.) It is for this reason that the Lord, having given eternal life to his people (cf. 1 John 5: 9-13), calls them to a *quality* of living which is eternal here and now.

Some people have erroneously thought that Jesus, in saying that his people shall never perish, and that no one can snatch them out of his hand, teaches the impossibility of final apostasy, or, which is the same thing, the ultimate perseverance of the saints. This, of course, is not true, as the entire New Testament

teaches. Any sheep is in danger of being lost, if he refuses to listen to the shepherd; and if that attitude is continued, the result will be destruction. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 8, 9; Heb. 6: 4-6.) Jesus is emphasizing the divine, not the human, side of the question. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 3-7; 2 Cor. 7: 1.) If we do our part, we may always be certain that the Lord will do his.

My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. These words are intended to give further assurance of the safety of those who abide in Christ. The thief, the robber, nor the wolf can reach them there. Not even the devil himself can do that; for their safety rests with the Father who is the ultimate in all things. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (See Col. 3: 3.) Paul's great comment on this fact in Rom. 8: 31-39 should be read by God's children often. He says,

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I and the Father are one. Inasmuch as the neuter gender is used here, the indication is that the Father and the Son are not personally one, but are one in essence. John pro-

claimed this fact in the very first part of his narrative. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1: 1.) In verses 28 and 29 of the text now before us, Jesus had affirmed that no one is able to snatch his people out of the hand of either himself or the Father, and added in the latter verse that the Father is greater than all. One of the attributes of God is omnipotence; and since the Father and the Son are essentially one in nature, this could only mean that Jesus was claiming for himself such power.

The Pharisees had accused Jesus of making himself equal with God, in the sense that he was God's Son as no other person is or can be. (John 5: 18.) The Jews had not misunderstood Jesus in this respect; for he not only said as much; he proved it as well. And now having plainly told them that they were not of his sheep, and that his own sheep were secure as far as the divine side is concerned; and with this crisp statement regarding his relation to the Father reiterated, the Pharisees were stirred to almost uncontrollable anger. (See verse 31.)

Retirement Beyond the Jordan

(John 10: 41, 42)

And many came unto him; and they said, John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. This passage

must be understood in the light of the previous verse: "And he went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode." The idea is that Jesus went forth from Jerusalem, where the Jews were about to stone him, and returned to the place where John was at the first baptizing. The place was probably "Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing." (See John 1:

28.) It is very probable that Jesus used this place as the base from which he carried on his Peraean ministry. (See Luke 13: 22-17: 10.) This was immediately before he went to Bethany near Jerusalem when he heard of the death of Lazarus. (See John 11.)

The presence of Jesus in the place where John formerly baptized no doubt caused the people who came to him to remember the work of the

harbinger, and they remarked that he did not prove his mission to be divine by miracles, but he did prove that he was a prophet by foretelling the character and success of Jesus. Either miracles or prophecy was conclusive proof of a divine mission; for no one could do either without the help of God. This should be a lesson to people who read the Bible. There are some who refuse to believe certain things, because they do not fit into their way of thinking; but if they will only take the time to listen to others and consider all the facts in the case, they may come to the con-

clusion that someone had told the truth about them.

And many' believed on him there. The word "there" is in contrast with Jerusalem. The people in the latter place not only did not believe on Jesus, but they tried to kill him; but in the country beyond the Jordan the situation was different. It is very likely that John's work in that region had prepared the way for the reception of Jesus. That which is said in these two verses gives some idea of the honor which the people of that place paid to the man who had worked among them, that is, John.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What was the difference in time between this lesson and the last one?
What was the feast of the dedication? and when did it occur?
Where did Jesus probably stay between the two feasts?
Give some facts as to the origin of the feast of dedication.
Tell something of the manner in which it was celebrated.

The Jews Again Question Jesus

What is indicated by saying that the time was winter?
Where was Jesus at the time the Jews approached him?
What question did they ask him?
What was the probable occasion for bringing the matter up at this time?
What kind of answer did they want from Jesus?
Why hadn't Jesus told them about this in plain language before?
Why tell the Samaritan woman and not them?
To whom is Jesus always willing to reveal himself?
What attitude should people always try to manifest toward him?

The Lord's Reply

What was the nature of the answer which Christ gave them?
What had he told them about himself?
Why had they failed to get his meaning?

Why did Jesus tell the Jews that they failed to believe in him? and what did that imply?

What spirit did they manifest toward him?

What did he say about his sheep?

What did he mean by saying that he gave them eternal life?

In what sense did he give them eternal life?

What is the difference between the duration and the quality of eternal life?

What did Jesus mean by saying that his people shall not perish?

Did he mean to say that it was impossible for them to be lost? Give reasons for your answer.

Why can't anyone snatch them out of his hand?

What side of the question was Jesus emphasizing? Discuss fully.

What did he say about the Father?

In what sense is he greater than all?

What did Paul say regarding this great question?

Did Paul teach that people cannot be lost after they are once saved? Give reasons for your answer.

What did Jesus mean by saying that he and the Father are one?

In what sense are they one?

Why did this so enrage the Pharisees?

Had Jesus discussed this question before, that is, had he made this claim before?

Retirement Beyond the Jordan

Where did Jesus go from Jerusalem?

Why did the people bring up the question about John's testimony regarding Jesus?

What was the difference in the attitude of the people there and in Jerusalem?



Not by the terrors of a slave

God's sons perform His will,

But with the noblest powers they have

His sweet commands fulfil.

—Isaac Watts