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

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**Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary**

ON

**UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS**

**FOR THE**

**CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

**1961**

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

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**FORTIETH ANNUAL VOLUME**

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## P R E F A C E

The lessons for another year have been finished; and, as anyone can see, they cover a wide range of subjects. The first quarter completes the lessons for this cycle on *The Gospel According to John*; and with this we have fairly full commentaries on the four gospel records. Those who preserve these lesson commentaries from year to year will, in time, have commentaries on many parts of the Bible—enough to give them a working knowledge of the entire Book.

The second quarter of this year is devoted to the period of the judges; and that is a follow-up of our study last year of the period of Moses and Joshua. Although these lessons are based on the Old Testament, they are lessons which generate faith on the part of those who study them. 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; cf. 1 Cor. 10: 6, 11.)

The third and fourth quarters are given to vital themes of the Scriptures; and if one will give due consideration to them, he will find that his knowledge of essential teaching of the New Testament has been greatly broadened. Christians are commanded to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"; and this is one way by which this can be accomplished. Paul tells us that "every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; cf. 2 Pet. 1: 3.) This wide range of subjects will be most helpful to that end.

Those who are privileged to teach in the Lord's day Bible school, where these lessons are generally used, will find that by careful preparation they can greatly extend their own knowledge of vital Bible themes. They should never be content with a mere repetition of that which is contained in the commentary. The commentary should simply serve as a guide to them, and then with the proper employment of their own mental powers and the judicial of other helps within their reach, they can always be an inspiration and a source of information to those who look to them for instruction.

This is the fortieth annual volume which the Gospel Advocate Company has published for use of churches of Christ; and the sixteenth 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.

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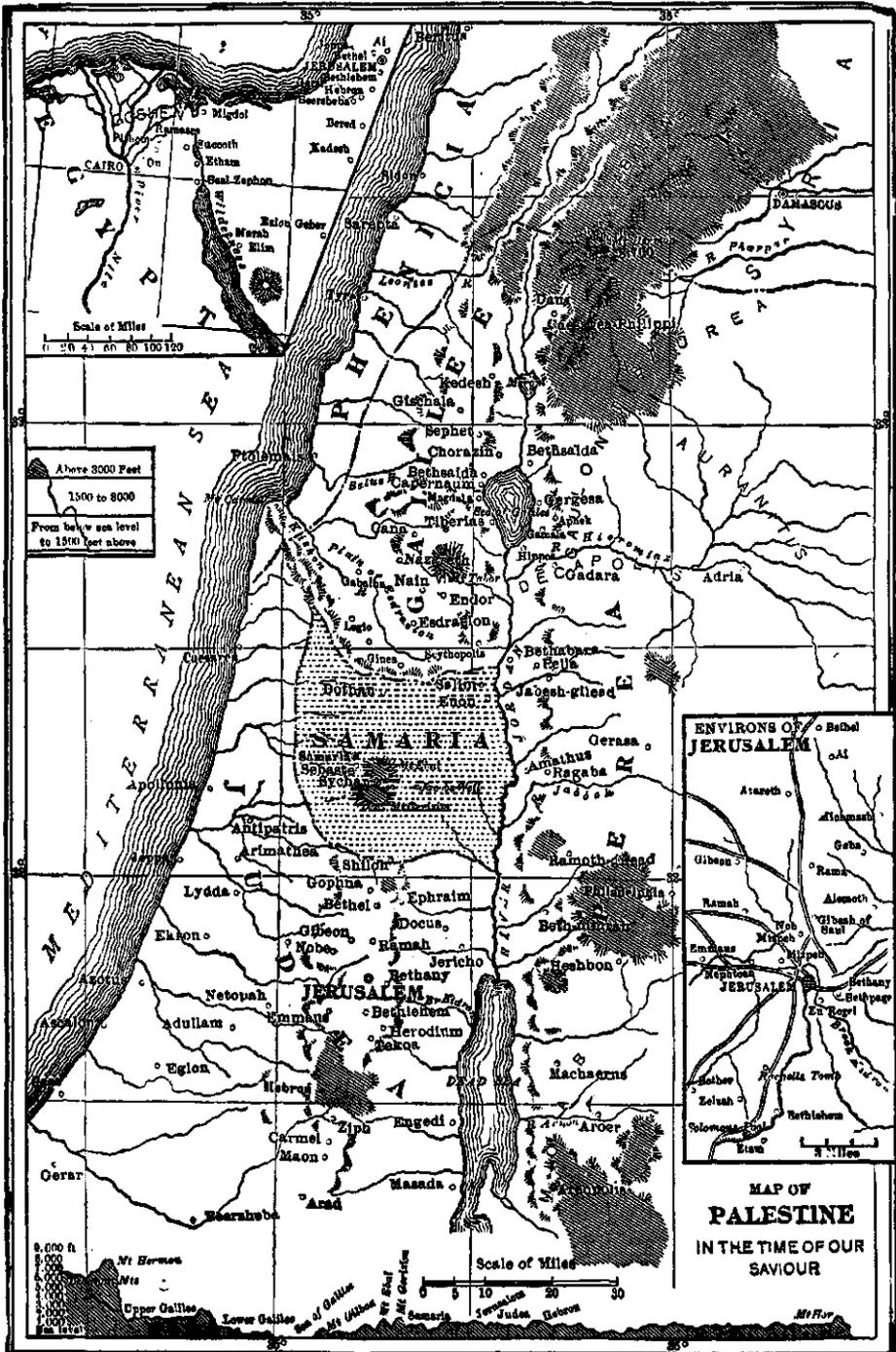
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**MAP OF  
PALESTINE  
IN THE TIME OF OUR  
SAVIOUR**

Scale of Miles  
0 5 10 20 30

Above 3000 Feet  
1500 to 8000  
From below sea level  
to 1500 feet above

6,000 ft  
3,000  
1,500  
Sea Level

Nt Hermon  
Nta  
Upper Galilee  
Lower Galilee  
Mt. of Galilee  
Mt. Gerizim  
Mt. Sennarim  
Judea  
Galilee

# FIRST 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—January 1, 1961

### THE POWER OF JESUS OVER DEATH

#### Lesson Text

John 11:1-4, 33-44

1 Now a certain man was sick, Laz'-a-rus of Beth'-a-ny, of the vil- lage of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Laz'-a-rus was sick.

3 The sisters therefore sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 But when Je'-sus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

. . . . .

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

33 When Je'-sus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews *also* weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

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

35 Je'-sus wept.

36 The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him!

37 But some of them said, Could

not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?

38 Je'-sus therefore again groan- ing in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

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

40 Je'-sus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Je'-sus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me.

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

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Laz'-a- rus, come forth.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."* (John 11: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 3-10.

#### Daily Bible Readings

- December 26. M.....Christ's Own Resurrection (Matt. 28: 1-10)
- December 27. T.....A General Resurrection Promised (Dan. 12: 1-3)
- December 28. W.....Assurance of Resurrection (Rom. 8: 19-25)
- December 29. T.....Promise of a Resurrection (John 6: 40-51)
- December 30. F.....Lazarus Raised (John 11: 31-44)
- December 31. S.....Raised at Christ's Coming (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)
- January 1. S.....Victory Over Death (1 Cor. 15)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Bethany. (Jesus was in Peraea when the word reached him.)

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, the family of Bethany, and the multitude.

## Introduction

Although there are other accounts of resurrections in the ministry of Jesus (Mark 5: 21-43; Luke 7: 11-17), the one before us in this study appears to be the most striking. It was one of those incidents in the life of Jesus which the gospel writers used to show that he had the authority to give life to whom he would. The raising of Lazarus from the dead was, in fact, a dramatic demonstration of the truth which the Lord spoke in John 5: 21: "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will." These single instances in the earthly ministry of Christ were but forerunners of the general resurrection which will take place in the last day. (Cf. John 5: 25, 28, 29.)

Christ not only had the power to raise people from the dead, but he also must himself be raised up. Hence we read, "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself; and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man." (John 5: 26, 27.) In becoming flesh, the Son was identified with the human race; and if one is raised up from the dead, so must the other also. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits

of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming." (1 Cor. 15: 20-23.)

The personal relationship between Jesus and the family of Bethany was both interesting and beautiful. It was in this home that we are permitted to see something of the private life of Jesus. There were, indeed, other homes where Jesus found a welcome, but none more interesting than the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. One of the most pathetic statements which Christ made about himself was the reference to his homelessness. (See Luke 9: 58.) The home in Bethany appears to have been to him a haven of quiet and rest; and it is fair to assume that he visited there as often as conditions would permit. The information which we have regarding Jesus and this family indicates that the home of the three in Bethany always offered Jesus a loving welcome, and it is easy to believe that the hearts of all four continued to respond to each other with sincere affection. (See John 11: 3.)

## The Golden Text

*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." When Jesus and his disciples reached Bethany, he found that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days; and inasmuch as the village was near Jerusalem, many of the Jews from the latter place had come to comfort the sorrowing sisters. Martha was the first to meet Jesus, and her first words to him were, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee." Jesus then assured her that her brother would rise again, but Martha did not grasp the full significance of the Lord's meaning.*

The passage which serves as the

golden text for this lesson is only a part of a sentence. The full statement is, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Three of the most tremendous words in human speech are found in the statement just quoted, namely, *life*, *death*, and *resurrection*. These words stand for ideas about which men eagerly crave light; and to know and accept the truth regarding them is to be set gloriously free.

The context seems to indicate that Martha had some information regarding these things, but her knowledge was imperfect and it did not bring her much comfort. Her

brother had lived and died, and while she expected him to rise again, the resurrection was in her mind a far-away event, and she would therefore have to wait until the last day before Lazarus could live again. It was in reply to this idea that Jesus voiced the words above. One of the principal things which Martha did not understand was the spiritual significance of the resurrection. She had never connected it with Jesus, but had thought of it as an event made known by a doctrine. But Jesus made it plain to her, and to all others who will accept his word,

that he, and not some event or doctrine, is the resurrection. This is true because life is in Jesus (Col. 3: 1-4). Resurrection is involved in life as an incident made necessary by the apparent triumph of death, but that apparent triumph is only temporary; because Jesus as the source of life has power over death. (Cf. Heb. 2: 14, 15.) The resurrection therefore is in Christ, just as life is, and it is his prerogative to raise the dead, and he demonstrated that authority by giving life to Lazarus then. Christ is the source of the resurrection!

## The Text Explained

### The Setting for the Miracle

(John 11: 1-4)

*Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother, Lazarus was sick.* Some Bible students have wondered why so signal a miracle as the raising of Lazarus from the dead is mentioned only by John. We have no direct answer to this question, but the probable reason for the omission by the other three was that their records were written during the time when the incident was fresh in the minds of the people of Palestine. Farrar thinks that to record the miracle during the lifetime of the beneficiary would have brought him into prominence, and would have again subjected him to the danger of being put to death. (Cf. John 12: 10, 11.) John wrote many years later, when such a danger was no longer possible.

It is interesting to observe the minute manner in which John sets forth the facts found in this narrative. "Lazarus of Bethany" would distinguish him from other men of the same name, and his relation to Bethany would also show that it was that "Bethany," and not the one where Jesus was at the time when the word of the illness reached him. (Cf. John 1: 28; 10: 40.) The village is also identified as that "of Mary and her sister Martha." Mary is also pointed out as "that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment," although the anointing had not taken place at the time of the events of

chapter 11. (See John 12: 1-8.) John could mention this as a fact, since when he wrote all of the action had taken place. This identification of Mary would also serve to distinguish her from other women of the same name who are prominently mentioned in the New Testament. (Cf. Luke 1: 27; Mark 16: 1; John 19: 25; Acts 12: 12.)

*The sisters therefore sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.* Bible students, in considering all the information we have regarding this family as a whole, are of the opinion that Martha was perhaps the oldest, and Lazarus the youngest. While there is no definite information on the subject, it appears in the light of John 12: 1-8; Matt. 26: 6-13; Mark 14: 3-9 that Simon the leper was in some way connected with the family; and many have thought that he was the husband of Martha. At any rate, these sisters, in their distress because of their brother's illness, sent word to their beloved Friend; and they probably felt that the very mention of the sickness of Lazarus would be enough to bring Jesus to them. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." (Verse 5.)

*But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.* In saying that this sickness was not unto death, Jesus evidently meant that Lazarus would not remain dead. He himself assigns the reason for the circumstances belonging to the occasion of Lazarus' sickness and death, namely, the glory of God, and

the opportunity to glorify the Son. This was manifested by the divine power which Jesus exercised in rescuing Lazarus from the jaws of death, as well as by the sublime teaching which grew out of the whole situation.

### **The Gathering: at the Tomb**

(John 11: 32-37)

*Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* These words of Mary were identical with those which Martha had spoken earlier, although Mary did not say the other things which Martha did regarding the resurrection. It appears that Martha manifested more self-control than did her sister. Some have thought that the words of the sisters to Jesus were intended as a mild rebuke for his delay in coming after he had received word of the illness of Lazarus, but there is no evidence that such was so. It seems more in keeping with their relation with Jesus to regard their words as expressing their complete confidence in Jesus' ability to save their brother from death, had he been there.

*When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.* Jesus was evidently deeply stirred in the inward man when he saw the weeping of Mary and the Jews. The basic meaning of "groaned" is a violent agitation of the mind, such as indignation; but in this case it appears that the violent agitation was due to grief, rather than to anger, as some have thought. Jesus was "troubled" as a result of his deep grief and sympathy for the sorrowing sisters and their friends. It is not necessary to conclude that Jesus was disturbed because of what may have been hypocritical weeping on the part of some of the Jews who were there. It is also well to note that the "weeping" which characterized Mary and the Jews was that of *wailing*. See the marginal note.

*And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.* If Jesus was merely asking for information regarding the place of the tomb, then it is obvious that he was simply speaking as a man,

but it is probably nearer the truth to say that his purpose in asking the question was to direct the people to the place where Lazarus had been laid. A similar situation, so far as the question is concerned, is found in John 6: 5, 6: "Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, said 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." But whatever may have been the purpose of the question, those to whom it was addressed immediately showed Jesus the place of burial.

*Jesus wept.* The original word for "wept" is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. It means to shed tears, to weep silently. There is a different word which means to weep audibly, and it is once used for Jesus in Luke 19: 41. Vincent quotes Godet as saying that the very gospel in which the deity of Jesus is most clearly asserted, is also that which makes us best acquainted with the profoundly human side of his life. The weeping of Jesus in the case now before us was in contrast with the wailing of Mary and the Jews.

*The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him! But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?* The miracle referred to in this question was that of chapter 9. But if Lazarus had merely been kept from dying, there would have been no evidence of the power of Jesus over death, so far as the Jews were concerned: the resurrection demonstrated that power.

### **Lazarus Raised from the Dead**

(John 11: 38-44)

*Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.* There is no indication in the words of the text regarding the position of the tomb, other than it was a cave. Sometimes the graves were vertically sunk into the ground (cf. Luke 11: 44), and sometimes they were prepared horizontally. Alford says that caves were generally horizontal, natural or artificial,—with recesses in the sides, where the bodies were laid. The mention of a cave would suggest

this plan in the case of Lazarus; and if so, it is very likely that a large stone, probably in the shape of a wheel, was placed in a groove and rolled up against the door. It is said that tombs in that country had to be closed securely to keep wild animals from molesting the bodies which were placed in them.

Jesus saith, *Take ye away the stone.* It should be observed that Jesus did not do anything in connection with the raising of Lazarus which men could do. Miracles, in fact, began only where the power of men ends. This principle is also illustrated in the case of Peter's deliverance from the prison in Jerusalem. (See Acts 12: 1-11.) This principle is also true in the matter of salvation: God saves, but man must obey.

*Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days.* Martha may have thought that Jesus wanted to look at the body of his friend, but she was reluctant to have the humiliating ravages of death exposed. However, in view of the conversation which she had with Jesus earlier, it is likely that she expected something out of the ordinary to be done, but in her anxiety for decorum she wanted to avoid the consequences of opening the tomb. If this was true, then her faith and her reason were struggling together. The body of Lazarus had not been embalmed.

*Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* The reference here is to the conversation already mentioned, and the Lord was evidently trying to strengthen her faith. It is hardly

probable that Martha had a complete understanding of the Lord's words, but if she would only follow his instruction, her faith would soon be transformed into sight; she would indeed see the glory of God.

*So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.* The term "hearest" clearly implies that Jesus had already prayed to the Father about the resurrection of Lazarus. He now made public the fact of his relation to the Father, so as to induce faith in those who were watching him. He wanted them to know that the miracle which he was about to perform was due to the power of God, and not merely to him as a man; or, to state the same thing in other words, he wanted the people to know that what he did was a result of his being sent and commissioned of God. This would demonstrate to the bystanders that there was a direct connection between him and the Father, a thing which the Jews had refused to believe.

*And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.* The loud voice was not for the benefit of Lazarus, but for the people who stood by. The fact that the dead man came forth at the instant his name was called would show conclusively that a miracle had been wrought.

### Questions for Discussion

What is the general subject for this quarter?  
State the aim of the lessons.  
What is the subject for today.  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

What was the significance of the resurrection miracles?  
Why was it so necessary that Christ himself be raised from the dead?  
Tell something of the relation which Jesus had with the Bethany home.

#### The Golden Text

What were the circumstances surrounding the Lord's return to Bethany?

How did Martha react to his arrival?  
What three great words are in his reply to her?  
Why are they great?  
What was Martha's idea regarding the resurrection?  
In what sense is Jesus the resurrection and the life?

#### The Setting for the Miracle

How do you account for the fact that this miracle is recorded only by John?  
Tell something of the details of his narrative regarding it.  
Who were some other women who were also called "Mary"?

How account for the fact that John referred to Mary's anointing Jesus, when the event had not happened at the time of this lesson?  
 Why did the sisters want Jesus to know of Lazarus' illness?  
 What does the record say about the relation of Jesus and this family?  
 What did Jesus say about the illness when he heard about it?  
 What did he mean by saying that it was not unto death?  
 In what way would it glorify God and Jesus?

**The Gathering at the Tomb**

Compare the reaction of the two sisters when they met Jesus.  
 How was Jesus affected when he saw Mary and the Jews weeping?  
 What is meant by "groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled"?  
 What question did Jesus ask? and why?  
 Why did Jesus weep?  
 How did his weeping differ from that of Mary and the Jews?  
 How did the Jews react to the weeping of Jesus?

What would have been demonstrated, had Jesus prevented the death of Lazarus?

**Lazarus Raised from the Dead**

Give some of the facts regarding tombs of the kind in which Lazarus was buried?  
 Why were they closed with great stones?  
 Why did Jesus tell them to remove the stone?  
 How does this principle operate in the matter of salvation?  
 Why did Martha object to removing the stone?  
 What did this indicate regarding her faith?  
 What is the significance of Jesus' reply to her?  
 In what way would she see the glory of God?  
 What is implied by the term "heardest" in the Lord's prayer of thanksgiving?  
 Why did he give thanks publicly?  
 Why did Jesus call with a loud voice to Lazarus?  
 What effect would such have on the multitude?

**Lesson II—January 8, 1961**

**JESUS DISCUSSES HIS DEATH**

**Lesson Text**

**John 12: 23-36**

23 And Je'-sus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor.

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. There same therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him.

30 Je'-sus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.

33 But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

34 The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

35 Je'-sus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light.

These things spake Je'-sus, and he departed and hid himself from them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Christ died for our sins." (1 Cor. 15:3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 5:1-20.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- January 2. M..... Jesus Tells of His Death (Matt. 16: 19-28)
- January 3. T..... Men Seek the Death of Jesus (John 18: 12-23)

January 4. W..... Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (Luke 22: 66-71)  
 January 5. T..... A Resurrection Promised (John 5: 28, 29)  
 January 6. P..... We are Raised to Walk a New Life (Rom. 6: 1-4)  
 January 7. S..... The Death of Christ in our Behalf (Rom. 5: 12-21)  
 January 8. S..... The Death of Jesus (Matt. 27: 33-56)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

### Introduction

The raising of Lazarus from the dead had a tremendous impact on the Jewish people, and especially upon the leaders. "The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." Caiaphas, the high priest, then made an unwitting prophecy regarding the death of Jesus; and "from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death." (See John 11:47-53.)

Jesus was aware of the imminent danger which confronted him, and it was for that reason that he no more walked openly among the Jews, but departed into the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, which is thought to have been some sixteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, and five miles east of Bethel, and there he tarried with his disciples. The time for the passover was at hand, and many went up to Jeru-

salem out of the country to purify themselves before the passover. Some of these people sought for Jesus; because "the chief priests and Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should show it, that they might take him." (See John 11: 54-57.)

It was six days before the passover when Jesus came to Bethany, and was entertained by some friends, including Mary and Martha. It was at the supper that Martha served, while Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair. Lazarus himself was one of them who sat at meat with Jesus. John usually makes a difference between the Jewish leaders and the common people, and so we read that the latter, hearing that Jesus was there, came, not only for his sake, but that they might see Lazarus too; but the chief priests made their plans to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus. The triumphant entry into Jerusalem followed the next day, and that proved to be the final week of the Lord's life before he was nailed to the cross.

### The Golden Text

"Christ died for our sins." There is no greater truth, nor one in which people who desire salvation from sin are more interested, than that which is stated in the words of this golden text. No one who professes to believe the Bible as the inspired Word of God will deny the fact that the blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of sins. But while practically all people who accept Jesus as God's Son believe this great truth, many are often greatly confused when they are confronted with the further fact that the salvation which is made possible by the blood of Christ is a conditional salvation. It is seemingly very difficult for some to understand how it is that Jesus died for the sins of all men (Heb. 2: 9), and yet at the same time accept

the fact that there is something for the individual sinner to do before he can obtain the forgiveness of his sins.

When man sinned he forfeited his life, and was sentenced to die. But Jesus, by the sacrifice of his own sinless life (2 Cor. 5: 21), satisfied the demands of the law which had been violated, and thereby made it possible for man to live. (See Rom. 3: 23-26; 1 Pet. 1: 18-21.) But if man's life is saved through the blood of Christ, then Jesus is entitled to that life; and it is clearly taught in the New Testament that no one can approach God except through and by virtue of the blood by which he was redeemed. (Cf. Eph. 1: 7; 2: 13-19.) Such, a *person must come to God as a servant of Jesus Christ.*

It is not so much a question as to *how* the blood of Christ made possible man's redemption and his access to the Father; it is rather a *fact* to be believed. A man who by mistake swallows a deadly poison is not deeply concerned about the chemical constituents of the antidote offered to him by the physician. He eagerly and thankfully accepts the fact that

the medicine will counteract the poison in his system and save his life; and he drinks it with all possible speed. Salvation is a matter of faith, and if we do as we are commanded to do, we have the assurance that the blood of Christ will cleanse us from all sin; for it is a fact "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

### The Text Explained

#### Some Reflections by Jesus

(John 12: 23-26)

And Jesus *answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.* The remarks of Jesus on this occasion grew out of a request on the part of some Greeks to see Jesus. "Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast: these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and Philip, and they tell Jesus." (John 12: 20-22.) It appears that this request furnished Jesus with the occasion to speak of the great purpose for which he had come into the world, namely, to die for the sins of the human race, and thereby make possible their salvation. And so Jesus notes that the time for his great sacrifice, and the subsequent glorification which would follow his ascension, had come, something which was necessary before his world-wide mission of saving the race could begin. This is what is meant by saying that the request of the Greeks suggested the remarks of Jesus.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.* This is the Lord's way of emphasizing the absolute necessity of his death before the accomplishment of his great mission to draw all men unto him. The disciples and the multitude had just witnessed his triumphal entry into the city, and they were expecting him to begin his reign as king immediately. He had, as we have just seen, told them that the time for his glorification had come, but it was far different from that which they expected. The point

in the Lord's illustration is seen in the fact that the germ of life in the grain of wheat can only pass into other grains by departing from the original grain and leaving it dead; and in a similar manner, the life which was in Christ could only pass into his disciples as a result of his own death.

*He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.* Although Jesus was speaking of his own death for the sins of the world, he nevertheless shows that even his own sacrifice is governed by a universal principle which is applicable throughout the natural world. If an effort is made to preserve a grain of wheat, it would remain alone until it decayed; but if it yields its life-germ as a sacrifice in accordance with the law of growth, it will multiply itself many times over. Death therefore is a condition of fruitfulness in any relation of life. Thus, the man who wants to live, in and for himself, shall die; but he who is willing to sacrifice his present life for the cause of Christ, shall have an eternal union with God in the glory world.

*If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor.* It is thought by some that this was the Lord's reply to the Greeks who sought an interview with him, but that is hardly probable. It appears to be more of a general appeal to all who would be his followers. It is true that Jesus would eventually triumph, but the road which he had to travel was one of suffering and death. He therefore calls upon his would-be disciples to follow his example, with the assurance that their reward would be in heaven. God will bless any one who follows his Son.

### The Voice from Heaven

(John 12: 27-30)

*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father., save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.* Bengel notes that the horror of the death which lay before Jesus and the zeal for obedience were in conflict, and that it was impossible to express both ideas together in human speech—hence, the Lord's words, What shall I say? The expression denotes intense anxiety and perplexity. The mighty disturbance which had been going on in the soul of Christ for sometime was nearing a climax. This was evidently one of the great temptations in the life of Christ (cf. Heb. 4: 15); can he bear the sufferings which were before him, or must the work of man's redemption be abandoned? It appears that at one moment he feels that he cannot endure the horrors of the impending cross, and he calls upon God to save him from them; but he then immediately realizes that that was the very reason for which he came into the world. (See Heb. 5: 7; cf. Matt. 26: 36-44.) God did hear his prayer, but instead of saving him from the death of the cross, he gave him strength to bear it. (Cf. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

*Father., glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* The name of God is glorified in the complete obedience of those who are serving him, when they are willing to turn away from their own will and do only the will of God. This is what Jesus now proposes to do. He has, by the power of God, completely overcome the temptation to shun the cross, and now he makes known to the Father that his whole desire is to please him. He in effect says, I am willing to endure anything, however great the suffering may be, if only I can honor thy will and do that which is pleasing in thy sight. (Cf. Heb. 12: 2.) Jesus then received divine assurance from heaven that his previous life had been entirely acceptable (cf. John 5: 30; 8: 29), that is, the name of God had been glorified by his conduct, and he was further assured that it would be further glorified by his death, resurrection, ascension, and coronation at the Father's own

right hand. This passage should afford wonderful encouragement to us; for it plainly shows us how we can conduct ourselves so that God's name will be glorified; and we must rest assured that his blessings will always attend us in whatever suffering we may be called on to endure.

*The multitude therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.* This circumstance reminds us of a similar one in the case of Saul of Tarsus, as he neared the city of Damascus. (Cf. Acts 9: 7; 22: 9.) It appears that all in Saul's party heard the sound of the voice, but all did not understand the message which was spoken. Some one has said that Divine voices are intelligible only to those who have susceptibility. This is also true of the written word of God. (Cf. John 8: 37, 43; Heb. 5: 11, 12.) The passage now before us plainly indicates that the voice from heaven came in response to the petition of Jesus that the Father would glorify his name, but he says that it did not come for his sake, but for those who were standing by. Robertson calls this a figure of exaggerated contrast, "not merely for my sake, but also for yours." If no one but Christ needed assurance from heaven, that could have been given to him without the use of audible words. The assurance for the people, however, was not for the same reason that it was in the case of Jesus. He was assured, as we have already seen, that his course of life was entirely acceptable to God; but the people needed to learn that Jesus is indeed the Son of God; for God would not have spoken as he did to an impostor.

### The Lord's Interpretation

(John 12: 31-36)

*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* This is a reference to the great crisis (the Greek word for "judgment" is *krisis*) in the conflict between God and the evil one. The death of Christ which was soon to occur would be the means of deciding who the victor would be. The crucifixion will at first appear to end the claim of Christ for universal

power and authority, but the resurrection would be only three days away. (Cf. Gen. 3: 15.) These great events will determine who the ruler of the world will be. The prince of this world is Satan. (Cf. John 14: 30; 16: 11.) The death and resurrection of Christ broke the power of Satan (cf. Heb. 2: 14, 15), and will eventually result in his final overthrow. (Cf. Rev. 20: 10.)

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.* The "lifting up" of Jesus apparently had direct reference to the manner of his death, as verse 33 seems to indicate. (Cf. John 3: 14; 8: 28.) Some Bible students, however, profess to see in the lifting up, not only his death, but also his resurrection and ascension. While, as already pointed out, the reference seems to have been primarily to his crucifixion, it is also true that the death of Christ would not have had the desired effect with reference to the world, if the resurrection and ascension had not taken place. With all the teaching of the New Testament before us, the "all men" cannot refer to every individual in the world. The probable meaning is that both Jews and Gentiles (cf. verses 20-22), which include all races of men, will be drawn unto him. This great work began on the first Pentecost following his ascension.

*The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?* This verse shows that the people understood Christ to say that he would die. The "law" was used by the people in the sense of the Old Testament. (Cf. John 10: 34.) The people of Jesus' day had been taught the Messiah would abide forever, the teaching being based on such passages as Psalm 110: 4; Isa. 9: 7; Ezek. 37: 25; Dan. 7: 13, 14. This was their conception of an earthly ruler. These people had heard Jesus refer to himself as the "Son of man" (verse 23), and they had seen him receive honors during his triumphal entry into Jerusalem which they understood as belonging to the Mes-

siah; and it was natural therefore for them to think that his use of the expression Son of man was equivalent to calling himself the Messiah. But when he spoke of the approaching death of the Son of man, it appeared to them that he was distinguishing himself from the Messiah, hence their question, "Who is this Son of Man?" Improper teaching always leads to misconceptions.

*Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light.* Jesus did not answer their question regarding the Son of man directly, but referred them to the source of light which was then among them. His reason for not giving them a specific answer was probably due to their attitude of mind. Some Bible students think that their question regarding the Son of man was asked contemptuously, while others are of the opinion that they were bewildered; but whatever may have been their reaction to the teaching of Jesus, it is evident that they were not in the proper frame of mind for a direct answer. (Cf. Matt. 13: 10-17; 21: 23-27.) The Lord's remarks concerning the light should have caused them to pause and ask for information.

It is a noticeable fact throughout the New Testament that information on vital religious subjects is never denied those whose hearts are pure. Jesus had already told the Jews as much. His words are: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." (See John 7: 17.) And concerning the opportunity of learning more, Jesus further said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath." (Luke 8: 18.) The practical meaning of this passage is, If we make use of the opportunities which are given to us for increasing our knowledge of spiritual things, then more opportunities will be given to us; but if we do not

use the ones we have, even they will be taken from us. (Cf. 2 Thess. 2: 8-12.)

*These things spake Jesus, and he departed and hid himself from them.* This is the end of the Lord's public ministry; he now returns to the obscurity out of which he came (John 11: 54; 12: 1) to deliver this final address to the Jews. Bible students

are not agreed regarding the teaching found in verses 44-50. Some think that it belongs to the address we have been discussing, while others are of the opinion that it is a kind of summary of the Lord's public teaching. If it is a part of the address just referred to, then it was spoken before he retired, probably to Bethany. (Cf. Luke 21: 37.)

**Questions for Discussion**

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

**Introduction**

What effect did the raising of Lazarus have on the Jewish leaders? What did Jesus then do? and why? Under what circumstances did he make his next appearance?

**The Golden Text**

In what way are the words of the golden text related to our salvation? Show why it is that some people are often confused regarding them. What happened to man when he fell into sin? How must the redeemed child always come to God? In what way must the truth of this text be regarded?

**Some Reflections by Jesus**

What circumstance gave rise to these words of Jesus? What use did he make of the occasion? How did he emphasize the absolute necessity of his death? Why must the grain die before fruit can be borne? What did Jesus hereby show regarding his own sacrificial death? What application does this principle have in our own lives? What appeal did Jesus make to his would-be disciples?

**The Voice from Heaven**

Why did Jesus say, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?"

In what way did temptation affect Christ? In what sense did God hear the prayer of Jesus to be spared the ordeal of death?

What did he mean by asking the Father to glorify his name?

What encouragement should this incident afford us?

What affect did the voice from heaven have on the multitude? and why?

Why do some people have difficulty in understanding the word of the Lord?

Why was the voice heard?

**The Lord's Interpretation**

What did Jesus mean by saying, "Now is the Judgment of this world?"

Who is the prince of this world?

In what sense was he cast out?

What did the Lord mean by his "lifting up"?

How are all men drawn unto him?

What reply did the multitude make to these words?

Why did they think that the Christ would abide for ever?

Why did they ask their question regarding the Son of man?

What does improper teaching always lead to?

In what way did the Lord answer their questions?

Why didn't he give them a direct reply?

What did he mean by referring them to the light?

What promise has been made to those who want the truth?

How did Jesus mark the end of his public ministry?

**Lesson III—January 15, 1961**

**JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES FEET**

**John 13:1-15  
Lesson Text**

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Je'-sus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Ju'-das Is-car'i-ot, Si-mon's son, to betray him,

3 Je'-sus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God,

and goeth unto God,

4 Riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 So he cometh to Si'-mon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Je'-sus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not

now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Je'-sus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Si'-mon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Je'-sus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should

betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."* (Matt. 23:11.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—1 Tim. 5: 8-16.

**Daily Bible Readings**

January 9. M.....	Jesus Came to Serve (Matt. 20: 20-28)
January 10. T.....	A Lesson in Humility (John 13: 12-20)
January 11. W.....	Rewards of Humility (Prov. 22: 1-9)
January 12. T.....	God's Attitude Toward the Lowly (Psalm 138: 1-11)
January 13. F.....	Childlike Spirit (Mark 9: 30-37)
January 14. S.....	The Mind of Christ (Phil. 2: 1-11)
January 15. S.....	An Example of Service (Acts 9: 36-43)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

**Introduction**

The principal events in the closing days of the Lord's earthly life are graphically told by the gospel writers, but the fullest account of the circumstances before us today is given by John. The Fourth Writer, in fact, is the only one who gives a full account of the washing of the disciples' feet. This incident took place sometime during the night which separated Thursday and Friday. Jesus and his disciples had gathered themselves together for their final supper (more about this later) before his crucifixion; and it was during the supper that the washing of the disciples' feet took place.

The disciples had followed Jesus for several months, and had heard the wonderful words of wisdom which he spoke, but they had never been able to control their own feeling with reference to each other. They were continuously seeking for the chief places of honor in their relation to Jesus. It appears that this same feeling was present on the occasion of the last supper. It may

have been in the very act of taking their places at the table that their minds were again stirred with reference to who should be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus had carefully and tenderly rebuked this spirit in them before, but on the night of their final visit together he decided to deal with the problem in a different manner.

The question of whether or not the Lord's people should engage in "foot washing" as a church ordinance has been discussed by professed followers of Christ throughout the years. But if one will only take the time to investigate the record, he will soon see that the practice was never engaged in by anyone, at any time, or under any circumstance for that purpose, that is, as a church ordinance by divine authority. It was a custom, pure and simple, and grew out of the practice of the people's wearing sandals, and therefore they needed to have their feet washed, pretty much as we need to wash our hands after engaging in our various activities.

### The Golden Text

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." These words were spoken by Jesus during his last discourse in the temple. The Lord had told the multitudes and his disciples to observe that which the Scribes and Pharisees, who were the teachers of the law of Moses, bade them do, but he warned them not to follow their example of saying and not doing. He then pointed out to them the efforts which these leaders made to gain recognition for themselves, and added, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth; for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted." (See Matt. 23: 1-12.)

The practical meaning of all of this seems to be fairly plain. Those who would follow Jesus are not to seek for worldly greatness, but are to be meek and lowly in heart as he is; and this is possible only as they learn of him. (See Matt. 11: 28-30.) No follower of Christ is to seek titles of honor which will serve to distinguish

him as being superior to his fellow Christians. Instead, they must look upon each other as being of equal value in the sight of God. And with the spirit of selfishness removed from them, each will come to regard the other better than himself, and will be found seeking the welfare of others more than his own. (Cf. Phil. 2: 3, 4.)

The principle which this text emphasizes was not only taught by Jesus; it was also the rule of his life. "But 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.) "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me." (Rom. 15: 1-3.)

### The Text Explained

#### Jesus in the Role of a Servant

(John 13: 1-5)

Now before the feast of the pass-over, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end. Bible students have long been in dispute regarding the time when Jesus and his disciples ate the last pass-over supper which was authorized by the law of Moses. Some think that they ate it a day early, so that Jesus himself could die as the true pass-over lamb at the regular time for the feast, while others are of the opinion that they ate the supper at the same time the other people did. The first three gospel writers seem to make it clear that Jesus and the disciples ate the supper at the usual time; but

some have taken John's statement in this verse to mean that the supper was eaten a day early, thus implying a discrepancy between John and the other three writers. But Robertson notes that "just before" does not mean twenty-four hours before; and he concludes that "Jesus ate the regular passover meal at the usual time."

Jesus realized fully the significance of the crisis which was before him, and what it meant for him to go to the Father, but these things did not keep him from manifesting his love to his disciples. He had loved them during the time of his personal ministry, and he would continue to love them unto the end. One has only to read John, chapters 13-17, to see how the culmination of the hour which was before Jesus tended to draw out the fulness of the Lord's love for his disciples. The washing

of their feet is one of the manifestations of his love for them.

And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God. It is important to notice the circumstances which surround the humble, but loving, service which John represents Jesus as getting ready to perform. In preparing to wash the disciples' feet, the Lord was aware (1) that all authority had been given unto him (Matt. 28: 18); (2) that he was the Divine Son of God (John 1: 1, 14); and (3) that he was soon to return to his former glory (John 17: 5; Phil. 2: 5-11). He also knew that one of his disciples, whose feet he would wash, was ready to betray him.

Riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself. Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to, wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. This was the supreme moment in the earthly ministry of Jesus, and yet he turns himself to the work of a slave; and with the very hands into which the Father had put all things he washes the feet of his disciples. This has been called the greatest anti-climax in history. Why did Jesus at this time, and in the midst of such glorious feelings, gird himself with a towel and stoop to the work of a slave? For one thing, he was about to interpret to his disciples what may be called the ultimate law of service. Such an interpretation could best be given by deed, rather than by word. So, instead of merely telling his disciples what they should do, as he had done on previous occasions, he translated the principle into concrete form, and made sacred by his own hands that which he expects his followers to do.

When the disciples had arrived at the upper room with Jesus from their walk from Bethany, they would, of course, in keeping with the custom of the times, need to have their feet washed before reclining upon the couches around the table. The good man of the house had the basin there for the purpose, but no servant had

been provided to perform the menial task. One of the disciples could easily have volunteered his service for the occasion, but it appears that they were all too proud for anything like that. They were looking for higher stations in the kingdom, and not the humble work of a servant; and one does not have to look very far even today to see the same spirit manifested by many professed followers of Christ.

### The Remonstrance of Simon Peter

(John 13: 6-11)

So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Inasmuch as nothing is said about the reaction of the other disciples, it is fair to assume that they were awed into silence by the strange conduct of Jesus, their Lord and Master, and were deeply perplexed by what they were seeing with their own eyes. But with Peter the situation was different. Being impetuous and impulsive, he could not restrain himself. While the others held their peace, Peter did his thinking out loud. The contrast between the Lord and himself was too great for the mercurial nature of this outspoken disciple. Greek scholars tell us that the contrast between "thou" and "my" is brought out in the original by placing the two pronouns next to each other, so that the reading, as Peter spoke the words, would be, "Lord, dost thou my feet wash?" One can almost see Peter drawing his feet up, as he spoke in his impulsive humility.

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter. This is enough to show that there was more in the design of Jesus than simply washing the feet of the disciples. As already indicated, these followers of Jesus had failed to get the force of the Lord's teaching regarding humility in the past; but now, in a final effort under the most solemn circumstances, he placed the lesson before them again, not by word, but by example. Peter, and probably the others, did not see the point at the time the act was being performed, but we may be sure that they never forgot what the Lord did. Their full understanding of its sig-

nificance would come later. (Cf. 1 Pet. 5: 5-7.)

*Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* In saying that Jesus should never wash his feet, Peter evidently was trying to express his deep reverence for his Lord. To Peter, it was completely out of place for the Master to perform the duties of a servant, or for the Teacher to wash the feet of a disciple. But even though his motive was probably pure, both Peter's attitude and words were out of place. Jesus had just assured the apostle that the act in question had a meaning, and that he would understand it later; and that should have been enough to cause Peter to submit to that which the Lord was doing.

But Jesus promptly told his impulsive disciple that if he did not submit to the washing of his feet, he would have no further part with him, that is, he would not be permitted to be his disciple and share in the blessings which would come later. Peter must be taught to have confidence in Jesus, and be willing to submit to anything which he says. This is a lesson which many people today need to learn. James declares that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." (See James 2: 10.) The term "stumble" means to set aside or disregard, and the lesson is simply this: anyone who will not submit to anything which Jesus commands has no part nor lot with him. (Cf. baptism, or anything else which the New Testament authorizes people to do.)

*Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* This statement is further evidence of Peter's impulsiveness, and plainly shows that he still did not understand that which the Lord was doing, and, as was usually the case with him, he went from one extreme to another—first, he is determined not to have his feet washed, and then he wants, not only his feet washed, but his hands and his head, too! For other instances of his going from one extreme to another, see (1) Matt. 14: 28, 30; (2) Matt. 16: 16, 22; (3) Mark 14: 27-31, 66-72.

*Jesus saith to him, He that is*

*bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.* This passage clearly shows that feet-washing was from necessity, and not merely as a ceremony. The implication is that the disciples had bathed themselves previous to their coming to the place of the feast; but the walk into the city with only sandals on resulted in the need to have their feet washed before reclining on the couches. This had not been done at the usual time, but Jesus, in order to teach the lesson of humility, arose from supper and performed the task. The reference to their not all being clean was to Judas, who was about to betray him.

### The Lesson Brought Home

(John 13: 12-15)

*So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?* This was the Lord's method of preparing the disciples for the lesson which they should get from that which he had just done. They, of course, understood the physical act of feet-washing, but that was not the sole purpose of the act; there was a meaning behind the deed which he wanted them to get.

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. Nothing that Jesus could have said would have had the effect that his example did. He called their attention to the fact that they both recognized and called him Teacher and Lord, which was indeed the truth; and he then stated the unmistakable conclusion which involved their duty. No servant or disciple should ever hesitate or be ashamed to do that which his lord and teacher does; but when it comes to the Divine Teacher and Lord, the demand is even greater. The Lord's example of humility, self-sacrifice, and service to others should for ever prevent any professed follower of his from seeking the pre-eminence, disputing

about places of honor, and shrinking from humble service which he may do for the welfare of others.

The incident now before us furnishes us with one of the most effective illustrations of the workings of human nature with reference to the matter of religious service on record. It takes an everyday situation like this, where nothing more was meant than the performance of an act for the cleansing of the feet which had been exposed to the dusty pathways, and trying to exalt it into a church ordinance involving a religious duty to God, while at the very moment refusing to keep those ordinances which are clearly prescribed of God, such as baptism, the Lord's supper, and many others. There is no record whatsoever of any instance of feetwashing being observed as an act

of worship. That type of service has never been anything more than a good work which one Christian may perform for any one who is in need of such service. (Cf. 1 Tim. 5: 9, 10.)

Jesus did not institute the practice of feet-washing, but simply took a familiar custom and used it to teach his disciples a much-needed lesson. The washing of feet as an act of hospitality has never been a custom among Western people, and to adopt it because of the example and words of Jesus on this occasion is to miss completely his lesson in performing the service for his disciples. No one who tries to make this a church ordinance ever washes feet in order to cleanse them; that is done before the service begins, in which case there is no need. (Cf. verse 10.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?  
Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

When, where, and under what circumstances did the washing of the disciples' feet take place?

What particular condition in the disciples' conduct called it forth?

Why has there been so much discussion of this subject by religious people?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this text?

What is its practical meaning for us today?

What place did this principle have in the life of Jesus?

#### Jesus in the Role of a Servant

When did Jesus and his disciples eat the last passover supper?

Give reasons for your answer.

What is said regarding the thinking of Jesus at the time of this lesson?

What is said regarding his attitude toward his disciples? and why?

How did his great sorrow emphasize his love for them?

Why did John mention so many of the circumstances which surrounded the Lord's act of humility?

What does John say that Jesus knew at the time of this incident?

Discuss John's description of the scene now before us.

What has the scene been called? and why?

What was Jesus seeking to interpret to his disciples?

Why was it necessary that their feet be washed?

What preparation had been made for such service?

Why didn't one of the disciples volunteer for the task?

What is the value of this lesson to us?

#### The Remonstrance of Simon Peter

Why was Peter different from the other disciples? Discuss fully.

Why didn't the others object to having their feet washed?

What did Jesus mean by his answer to Peter?

Why couldn't he understand what Jesus was doing then?

Why did Peter say that Christ should never wash his feet?

What did Jesus say in reply to that statement?

What application does the principle have today?

What was Peter's next reaction? and why? Show how he usually went from one extreme to another.

What implication did Jesus give regarding feet-washing?

Why were they not all clean?

#### The Lesson Brought Home

How did Jesus prepare his disciples for the lesson he wanted to teach them?

What comparison did he use to drive the lesson home?

What effect should his example have on us?

What does this incident illustrate regarding human nature?

What place does feet-washing have among the Lord's people today?

Show the difference between Christ's instituting a practice, and simply making use of a well-established custom.

Lesson IV—January 22, 1961

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

Lesson Text

John 13: 34, 35; 15:12-31

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

15 No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that

ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you, that ye may love one another.

18 If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 13:1-13.

Daily Bible Readings

January 16. M.....	Love Described (1 Cor. 13: 1-13)
January 17. T.....	The New Commandment (John 13: 31-35)
January 18. W.....	Proof of God's Love (1 John 4: 7-17)
January 19. T.....	Love to Continue (Rom. 12: 9-21)
January 20. F.....	Expressed Love (John 15: 12-17)
January 21. S.....	Love, Bond of Perfectness (Col. 3: 12-17)
January 22. S.....	The Love of God Everlasting (Jer. 31: 1-6)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

The story is told of a stranger, overtaken by night, who sought shelter in a building which proved to be the home of a preacher and his family. The stranger was welcomed into the house and hospitably entertained; and since it was near the hour for the family worship, he was invited to join them in the service. According to the custom of the day, each member of the household was asked a question, which he was expected

to answer in the light of the Scriptures. When it came the stranger's turn he was asked, "How many commandments are there?" and he promptly replied, "Eleven." The host, surprised rather than shocked at such ignorance, hastened to correct the error by reminding him that there are only ten commandments. But the stranger countered, "Have you never read, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one

another?" This guest proved to be the famous Archbishop James Ussher, one of the most renowned Bible students of his day, and the preacher in whose home he was visiting was so impressed by the answer that he preached on the "new commandment" the following Lord's day.

No one can read the writings of John in the New Testament without being struck by the emphasis which is placed upon the principle of love. Paul also wrote along the same line. "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 commandments, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy

neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13: 8-10.)

The great empires of the earth have been built upon the principle of force. It has been necessary to put the fear of the conqueror into the hearts of the conquered, and when that was done it was relatively easy to keep the latter in submission. But Jesus, the King of the most enduring kingdom the world has ever seen, has depended for the allegiance of his people solely on the principle of love. When once the love of God is in the heart of a man, no commandment is too difficult for him to obey. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.)

### The Golden Text

"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love." The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians has been called Paul's Hymn to Love, which has been described as one of the greatest things which he ever wrote. The chapter naturally falls into three parts, (1) the importance of love, 1-3; (2) the nature of love, 4-7; and the pre-eminence of love, 8-13. The verse which serves as the golden text for today is a kind of summary of the chief ingredients of Christianity, with love occupying the place of honor. Faith will lead one to accept as true anything which the Bible teaches; hope enables him to put his confidence in everything which God promises; while love causes him to try to obey all that the Lord commands.

It will make little difference about what one may believe or put his trust in, if he does not render the required obedience; but with love as the motivator of obedience, it is easy to see why it is greater than faith and hope. And another reason why love is greater than the other two is seen in the fact when we

reach the other side, faith will be lost in sight, and hope will end in fruition; but love will endure for ever.

Paul's great word about love may be regarded as an ideal for life, and it is certain that no one ever gave a greater demonstration of the principle of love at work, than did he. When love called, he arose and went forth, leaving everything which was dear to him—his home, his country, the traditions of his fathers; and it was all for the sake of others, and the glory of God. And Paul's ideal of love has become the permanent possession of all who would follow Christ, and its place is amid the stress and worry and fever of the commonplace experiences of life, the place where the Christian life must be lived; for it is there that the love of which the apostle speaks will come with its healing hand, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things. This is the way to which the Lord calls us, and therein lies our truest happiness.

### The Text Explained

#### The Badge of Discipleship

(John 13: 34, 35)

*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also*

*love one another.* When Jesus spoke the words which make up this section of our lesson text for today, Judas had just left the supper room where they had assembled for the passover supper, and had gone out

into the night to carry out his plans for betraying Christ into the hands of his enemies. It was a night much to be remembered; for it was then that the Lord's supper was instituted; it was the night during which Christ gave the remarkable demonstration of humility by washing his disciples' feet; and it was also the night in which Jesus gave Judas to understand that he was aware of the treachery he was about to commit. Anything which Jesus spoke on a night like that would make a deep impression upon his listening disciples.

The verses of the paragraph which immediately precede the passage now under consideration should be read; for it is in them that we get a glimpse of the tenderness with which Jesus looked upon his disciples as he was about to leave them. "When therefore he was gone out [that is, Judas], Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you."

This is the only place in the gospel records where Jesus refers to his disciples as "little children." The expression is often found in First John, but nowhere else in the New Testament, with reference to the disciples. Jesus apparently looked upon his disciples as if they were about to be left as orphans in the world, and his love for them was intense. It was against this background that he spoke of the new commandment which he was giving them.

The command to love was not new, for such a command was given in the law of Moses. "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah." (Lev. 19: 18.) But the quality of the love which Jesus bade his disciples have for each other was new. The difference between the love Jesus taught and that which had been previously commanded may be compared to the difference between the deep affection of a loving family and that of a kindly spirit of neighbourliness. Any love

which has the heart of Jesus as its standard must of necessity be new. The love which Christ urged upon his disciples was based upon his own love for them; and such love as that had never been demonstrated before.

*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* The love which Christ taught his disciples to have for each other was such as would distinguish them from all other men. It was to be the badge which would identify them as the disciples of the Lord. Discipleship had previously been recognized by various marks and tests, but no teacher had ever required his disciples to manifest love as their distinguishing trait, before Jesus; and no one has done that since. Our Lord pushed aside the external, such as dress, language, occupation, and the like, and made the inward trait of love the test which would mark those who possess it as his. They are to be known not by mind, but by heart; not by intellect, but by soul.

It is said that when the apostle John was nearing the end of his life, he had to be carried into the assembly of the saints; and being too old to speak to the brethren at length, he simply repeated over and over the expression, "Little children, love one another." Some of the brethren, wearied with the continual repetition, asked him why he always said this, and he replied, "Because it is the Lord's commandment: and if it only be fulfilled, it is enough."

### **"Greater Love Hath No Man Than This"**

(John 15: 12-17)

*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.* This may well be called the supreme commandment of Christ, and the singular number indicates that it summarizes all other commandments. "And if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13: 9b, 10.) The literal rendering of the passage is "that ye keep on loving one another," and it is to

partake of the quality of Christ's love.

The reason why love can be commanded is because of its nature. Two of the words most frequently used in the New Testament for love are *phileo* and *agapao*. (Cf. John 21: 15-17 and the marginal note in the American Standard Version.) *Phileo* is based on emotion and expresses natural affection, such as a parent feels for a child, or one close friend feels for another. But *agapao* does not depend on emotion for its effectiveness, but rather on moral choice. It is therefore loftier and less impulsive than *phileo*; and it is for this reason that such love can be commanded. "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.)

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* Jesus was evidently talking about the greatest love which human beings are capable of manifesting, and for the moment he was measuring his love by that standard; but if we turn to Rom. 5: 6-8, we shall see that his love was infinitely greater than that. "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Cf. John 3: 16.)

One has only to read such classic love stories as that of Damon and Pythias in order to see the effect which such devotion has on the world; but when we take into consideration the matchless love which Christ enjoined upon his followers, we are completely overwhelmed by its intensity. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3: 16.)

To lay down one's life is to give it up in death, or at least to be willing to do so. But there is another idea in this connection which can find practicable application in our everyday living, namely, the great

principle of self-sacrifice. Yes, we can lay down our lives for the brethren day by day, and that is exactly what we ought to do. We can live, not for our own pleasures, but to make gladness more possible for those who walk in the shadows of great sorrow, in order to make goodness more possible for those who stand in the tense darkness of great temptations. By assuming this kind of attitude we pass into the life of the world each day, not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto its needs; and those who do these things have heard the voice of the greater love.

*Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.* The commandment which Jesus gave to his disciples is to be received and obeyed, not as mere bondservants, but as friends. This is true because the apostles were taken into the Lord's confidence and treated as friends, and all who subsequently become his disciples will have the benefit of the revelation which Jesus made to them. This gives us some idea of the high plane upon which the commandments of Jesus are to be received and obeyed by his people. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.)

*Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* Men are not the friends of Jesus because they have a natural affinity with him, but because he deliberately chose them before they knew either him or his worth. And also the choice was made with a great aim in view. Compare what is here said regarding the apostles with 1 Pet. 2: 9; Tit. 2: 14, which is true of all Christians.

*These things I command you, that ye may love one another.* This was the beginning, and it is the end of all his precepts; and this statement which he made to them forms a

transition to the next section of our lesson, which is

**The Hatred of the World**

(John 15: 18-21)

*If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you.* When Jesus offered his intercessory prayer for his disciples just before he left them he did not ask that they be taken from the world, but that they should be kept from the evil one. (See John 17: 11-19.) The disciples of Christ therefore have a definite relationship with the world; and although Jesus taught his disciples to love each other, he warned them that they might expect an entirely different reaction from the world. In fact, Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, had pronounced a blessing on his people who are persecuted, and had told them that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (See Matt. 5: 9-16.)

*If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* It is the nature of all intelligent persons to love that which is in sympathy with themselves, and to oppose that which is out of harmony with their views; and inasmuch as the church and the world are diametrically opposed to each other, it is but natural that the world hates the Lord's people. This is especially

true when Christians are devoted to the Lord; but if they become lax and endeavor to partake of the ways of the world, they will soon find that the world relaxes its opposition to them. The idea contained in the expression "I chose you out of the world" is exactly the same as that found in the term *church*. The word "church" literally means *the called out*.

*Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.* (Cf. John 13: 16; Matt. 10: 24; Luke 6: 40.) The apparent purpose of these words was to encourage the disciples in their contact with the world. If they are persecuted, they are to remember that their Lord received the same treatment; and if their word is heeded, they can know that Jesus had the same experience. And since they are to receive the same treatment as their Lord did, they can always have the satisfaction of knowing that they have his approval.

*But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.* Vincent notes that the name of Christ represents the faith, the attitude, the claims, and the aim of the disciples. His name is their confession, and on it they always rely. The world always acts in ignorance. (See 1 Cor. 2: 6-8; Acts 3: 17.)

**Questions for Discussion**

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

**Introduction**

What is the significance of the "new commandment"?

What principle does John frequently emphasize?

In what way does Paul speak of love?

What practical application does it have in the economy of Christ?

How does the child of God demonstrate his loyalty to him?

**The Golden Text**

How has the chapter from which this text has been taken been described?

Give an outline of the chapter.

In what way does the golden text sum up the chapter?

Why is love greater than faith and hope?

Show that love as Paul describes it is an ideal for life.

**The Badge of Discipleship**

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this section?

With what endearing term did Jesus address his disciples?

Why did he speak of them in this manner? In what sense was the commandment a new one?

What is the standard of love for the Lord's people?

In what sense is love the badge of discipleship?

What incident in the life of John emphasizes the importance of love?

**"Greater Love Hath No Man Than This"**

What did Jesus say his commandment to the disciples is?

What is the significance of the singular number?

In what sense can love be commanded? Explain fully.

Why can't a man love God and at the same time hate his brother?

What did Jesus mean by saying, "Greater love hath no man than this"?

What is the greatest degree of love which can be demonstrated?  
 How may we know the true meaning of love?  
 In what practical sense may we lay down our lives for the brethren?  
 Why did Jesus call his disciples his friends?  
 What is the difference between a servant and a friend?  
 What is the real proof of our love for God?  
 How did the men of the lesson become disciples of Jesus?  
 Why did Jesus say he chose them?  
 Tell something of his aim for all his people.  
 What is the beginning and the end of all of the Lord's precepts?  
 In what way are the second and third section of our lesson connected?

**The Hatred of the World**  
 What did Jesus not ask for his disciples when he prayed for them? Why?  
 What does this show regarding them and the world?  
 Why did Jesus mention "hate" of the world at this time?  
 Why does the world hate the Lord's people?  
 Under what circumstances will the world look with favor upon Christians?  
 In what way does the statement of the Lord illustrate the meaning of the term church?  
 Why did the Lord compare his relation of the world to that of his disciples?  
 In what way would this encourage them?  
 What basic reason did Jesus give for the action of the world?  
 What does the name of Christ stand for in the life of his people?  
 What trait is always seen on the part of the persecuting world? Why?

**Lesson V—January 29, 1961**

**JESUS COMFORTS THE DISCIPLES**

**Lesson Text  
John 14:1-15**

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

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

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

4 And whither I go, ye know the way.

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

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

7 If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Je'-sus 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?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.

15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." (Rev. 14:13.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—John 14:16-31.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- January 23. M..... A Comforter Promised (John 16: 5-7)
- January 24. T..... A Prayer for the Disciples (John 17: 11-19)
- January 25. W..... Unity Good and Pleasant (Psalm 133)
- January 26. T..... Christ our Advocate (1 John 2: 1-4)
- January 27. F..... A Living Intercessor (Heb. 7: 19-22)

January 28. S.....Division Condemned (1 Cor. 3: 1-17)

January 29. S.....God Revealed to Us in Christ (Luke 10: 17-24)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

### Introduction

Comfort for its adherents is one of the cardinal features of the religion of Christ, but many of us do not realize just what is meant by the term. The word "comfort" is a strong word. It suggests the idea of bracing, rather than *soothing*. It indicates the strength which comes from companionship with the Lord. (Cf. 1 John 1: 6, 7.) This sense is contained in the root meaning of the word itself, namely, "fortitude in alliance with some one;" and when that some *one* is the Lord, we can begin to see how it is possible for the Christian to be strong and courageous, rather than weak and fearful.

The story is told of a teacher of young men preparing for the ministry who was wont to say to them, "Gentlemen, when you are uncertain, as you will often be, on what subject to preach, you cannot be wrong in following the line indicated by the prophet's cry, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably.' [See Isa. 40: 1, 2a.] For the truest ministry is the ministry of comfort. You are not ordained to give good advice, but to preach

glad tidings." Any thoughtful person will recognize this as being wise counsel; for the gospel is above all else a message of comfort, a declaration of the kindness and love of God, and an assurance that God will not permit his children to be tempted beyond their ability to bear; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that they may be able to endure it.

As was pointed out in a previous lesson, Jesus did not ask the Father to take his people out of the world; but rather to keep them from the evil one. He did not request that the way be made easy for them, but that they be given the strength to bear whatever might come their way, and to perform whatever tasks that might be assigned to them. Jesus plainly told his disciples that hardships awaited them, but they are divinely assured that if they love God and are called according to his purpose, that all things, which includes both the good and the bad, will work together for good. This is the true meaning of the comfort which the Lord gives to his people.

### The Golden Text

*"And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."* Without going into detail regarding the specific situation which called forth this statement, it is easy for us to see that its purpose is to give assurance, or comfort, to those who die in the Lord. Many of the early Christians were bitterly persecuted, even unto death, but that was as far as men could go. If the child of God remained faithful to him and died in the Lord, his blessings would be eternal.

But if one is to die in Christ, it will be necessary for him to get into Christ and remain faithful until death. We learn from the New Testament that to be in Christ is to be in his body, which is the church. "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.) The term "fulness" means that which makes Christ complete, just as a wife makes her husband complete. (See Eph. 5: 22-33.) It is, of course, impossible for one to be in the literal body of Christ, but he can and must be in his body which is the church.

The New Testament not only tells us what it means to be in Christ; it just as plainly tells us how to get into him. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) The expression "through faith," set off by commas, is a parenthetical phrase of explana-

tion. The original says "through *the* faith," that is, through the gospel. (Cf. Acts 6: 7.) And so with this idea in mind, the passage may be paraphrased as follows; "For ye are

all sons of God in Christ Jesus, as a result of your having obeyed the gospel. This is true, because as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

### The Text Explained

#### Grounds for Hope and Confidence

(John 14: 1-3)

The portion of scripture from which this lesson is taken is a part of the discourse which Jesus delivered to his disciples on the night of his betrayal; and it is easy to see that the mind and heart of the Saviour are in it. It is always as new as the latest sunrise, and the last word in its praise will never be spoken while time continues.

In speaking of the occasion of these remarks, Schaff notes that such an evening occurred but once in the world's history, and that the fulness of eternity itself was condensed into a few fleeting moments. The farewell words of our Lord (13: 31-17: 26) stand alone even in the Book of books. The nearest approach to them may be found in the parting song and blessing of Moses (Deut. 32 and 33), and in the farewell address of Paul to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20: 17ff.). We have in the Lord's remarks more than words, we have things, verities, acts of infinite love going out from God, and going into the hearts of men. Bengel sums up the principal thought of the last address of Jesus in these words: "I came from my Father in heaven, I fulfilled his will on earth; and I return to my Father."

Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. It appears that the part of the discourse from 13: 31 to 14: 31 was delivered while Jesus and the eleven disciples were still at the table where they had eaten the passover, and where the Lord's supper had just been instituted. The address began, apparently, immediately after Judas left the room. Many things that evening had conspired to trouble the disciples. For example, he had told them that one of their number would betray him. (13: 21, 22.) He had implied that he was soon to leave them, and had informed them that they could not follow him. (13: 33.) He had also told Peter, in the presence

of the others, that he was very soon to deny him. (13: 36-38.)

It is not strange therefore that distress would overtake them, and Jesus, knowing that, sought to reassure them. Phillips renders the statement in these words: "You must not let yourselves be distressed—you must hold on to your faith in God and to your faith in me." Bible students who understand Greek syntax tell us that the verbs (believe) may be taken either as indicatives or as imperatives; but in view of the hortatory character of the discourse, the rendering in the text is probably the correct one. (See marginal note.)

*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.* The disciples were saddened at the thought of being left in the world without their Master, but he assured them that the separation would not be permanent. He further told them that the place to which he was going contains plenty of room, and that he himself is going to prepare a place for his own. All of this shows that a reunion is possible, and that what they looked upon as a calamity was in reality a blessing. He will say more about this later on in the discourse. (Cf. 16: 7ff.)

Heaven is described in the Bible as being the dwelling place of God (1 Kings 8: 30; Matt. 6: 9), and that means that heaven is as real as God. No one who reads the fourth chapter of Revelation can doubt that. The material of our world is not as "real" as is the spiritual. This is clearly implied in the verses now under consideration. Throughout the entire New Testament, heaven is pictured as a place to be anticipated by the righteous. It is a realm of joy (Luke 15: 7) and peace (Luke 19: 38). The names of the righteous are recorded there (Luke 10: 20; Phil. 4:

3); and there the Christian will receive his final reward (Matt. 5: 12).

The Christian life is in Christ, and it will not end with physical death. The quality of this life in Christ is eternal, and it can no more be destroyed than can Christ (Col. 3: 3, 4). It follows therefore that the life of God's people must be continued after death; and that is why Jesus said that he was going to prepare a place for them. The inspired picture of heaven is intended to represent the ultimate triumph of God's purpose in a redeemed people who are made for ever secure in a holy city. It was in this way that the Lord comforted his disciples, and assured them that there was no basis for troubled hearts.

### The Way Pointed Out

(John 14: 4-6)

*And whither I go, ye know the way.* The Lord's destination was the Father, and the route was by way of the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension; and notwithstanding the fact that Jesus had often spoken to the disciples about these matters, they had not perceived his meaning. (Cf. Matt. 16: 21; Luke 18: 31-34; John 7: 33; 13: 33.) It is possible that Jesus made the statement of this verse in order to provoke questions on the part of the disciples, such as the one asked by Thomas. One of the reasons for their failure to understand what Jesus had said about these matters, if not the principle reason, was their idea, along with most of the Jews, that Jesus would set up an earthly kingdom. It appears that his vicarious suffering and death for the race never occurred to them.

*Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?* Thomas appears in the Book of John as a loyal but somewhat dull disciple, whose misapprehensions were used to bring out important truths. (Cf. 11: 16; 20: 24-29.) He is a fair representative of the multitudes today who fail to see the truth of the Bible because of their preconceived ideas. Albert Barnes makes this thoughtful observation: "Had Thomas *laid aside* his previous opinions—had he been willing to receive the truth as Jesus plainly spoke it, there would have been no diffi-

culty. Faith would have been an easy and natural exercise of the mind. And so with the sinner. If he were *willing* to receive the plain and unequivocal doctrines of the Bible, there would be no difficulty; but his mind is full of opposite opinions and plans, occupied with errors and vanities, and these are the reasons, and the only reasons, why he is not Christian."

*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.* Instead of rebuking Thomas for his ignorance (cf. Heb. 5: 1, 2), Jesus gently taught him, and all others who will listen to him, one of the greatest truths of all times. It is only by obeying the instructions of Jesus, following his example, and depending upon his merits, that any one can reach the Father. Following the paraphrasing of this passage by Thomas a Kempis, we note that without the way, there is no going; without the truth, there is no knowing; and without the life there is no living. Jesus is the way which we must follow; the truth which we must trust; and the life which we must hope for; because he is the inviolable way, the infallible truth, and the endless life.

### Jesus and the Father

(John 14: 7-15)

*If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.* Jesus sometimes spoke in this discourse to his disciples as if his glorification was an accomplished fact, and the obvious meaning here is that he spoke by way of anticipation of that event, insofar as the term "henceforth" is concerned. If the disciples of Jesus had really understood him, they would have known the Father; for he and the Father are one. But he assured them that the time was coming, and was even now at hand, when they would perceive this truth. Robertson calls this a bold and daring claim to deity; and he continues, "The only intelligible conception of God is precisely what Jesus here says. God is like Christ."

*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? Philip, like Thomas, failed to grasp the meaning of that which Jesus was saying. He did not realize that the Son had come into the world to reveal the Father. Nothing, of course, could be more desired than a vision of the true God; but since there was no access to God apart from Jesus, just so there can be no vision of him apart from the Son. This statement would prepare the disciples for the work of Jesus as the revealer of God.

*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.* Aside from Paul, there is no other writer in the New Testament who dwells more at length on the doctrine of the incarnation than John. The literal meaning of "incarnate" is to embody in flesh (cf. John 1: 14); and so, when we speak of the incarnation the reference is to the process whereby the Eternal Word of God appeared in history as the man Jesus Christ. This was done to reveal God to men in the fulness of his love (John 3: 16), and to make possible a way to save them (2 Cor. 5: 18-21).

It should be kept in mind, however, that in becoming flesh this Divine Being did not cease to be the Eternal Word (cf. Rev. 19: 13). He did not lay aside his divine nature, but only his glory (cf. Phil. 2: 5-11; John 17: 5). Before the incarnation he was "in the form of God," but with that great event he took "the form of a servant." He did not become a new being, but entered into a new mode of being, which is indicated by the term "flesh" (Heb. 5: 7). It was in this way that he became the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of men. This is what Jesus wanted his disciples to believe; but he told them that if they could not believe that which he himself said about it, they could at least accept the testimony of the works which he did. But in either case, whether by words or by works, the source of the testimony was God himself, that is, he did both the

speaking and the working through the Son.

Verily, verily, *I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.* While Jesus was engaged in his personal ministry he performed sufficient miracles to demonstrate that the Father was working through him, and he promised that the believing disciples, following his return to the Father, would do similar works (cf. Mark 16: 17-20; Acts 4: 16, 22; 5: 12; 9: 40-42; 19: 11, 12; 20: 9, 10); but he further promised that greater evidences of his union with the Father would be manifested through his followers. (Cf. John 16: 7-11.) These "greater works" belong to the dispensation of the Spirit, and they are of a higher nature than mere bodily cures. Vincent quotes Godet as saying, "That which was done by St. Peter at Pentecost, by St Paul all over the world, that which is effected by an ordinary preacher, a single believer, by bringing the Spirit into the heart, could not be done by Jesus during his sojourn in this world." Vincent further notes that the personal ministry of Jesus was local, while that of the Spirit is universal.

And whatsoever *ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* If *ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.* This is the first mention of the phrase "in my name." (Cf. John 16: 23, 24.) The efficacy of prayer in the name of Christ was the second indication which Jesus gave of his union with the Father. The mere mention of the name of Christ in prayer does not necessarily mean that the prayer is acceptable to God. That which makes it effective is "the spirit and *mind* of him who prays," along with the fact that the prayer is prompted by the mind of Christ, and in reliance on the bond which unites us to him.

*If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.* This is the introductory statement to the third token of the union of the Father and the Son, namely, a prayer that the Father send them another Comforter, an abiding one, even the Spirit of truth. This, as the verse now under consideration indicates, is conditioned

on the keeping of his commandments. (Cf. 1 John 5: 3.) The fourth and all-convincing token of the union

between the Father and the Son is his return in the manner described in verses 18-21.

**Questions for Discussion**

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

In what way did Jesus deal with Thomas?  
Show the great significance of the Lord's reply to him?

**Introduction**

What place does comfort have in the religion of Christ?  
What is the basic meaning of the term?  
What emphasis should be given to comfort in our preaching?  
What special request did Jesus make to his Father regarding his disciples?

**Jesus and the Father**

Why didn't the disciples of Jesus know the Father?  
What did he mean by saying "from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him"?  
What bold and daring claim did Jesus make at this time?  
What request did Philip make? and why?  
What would the Lord's answer to him do for the disciples?  
What is the nature of the subject Christ next deals with?

**The Golden Text**

What is the general purpose of the words of this text?  
What is necessary in order for one to die in Christ?  
How does one get into Christ?

What is meant by the term "incarnation"?  
What was God's purpose in sending Jesus Christ into the world?  
In what sense was God in the Son, and the Son in the Father?  
What did Jesus ask the disciples to believe?  
What two lines of evidence did he offer for their consideration?  
What did Jesus say about the works which his disciples would do?  
In what sense could they do greater works than he?

**Grounds for Hope and Confidence**

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this lesson text?  
Where was Jesus when these words were spoken?  
Why would the disciples need to be comforted?  
Show how the words of Jesus in this section would encourage them.  
Does the Bible teach that heaven is a real place?  
Give reasons for your answer.  
Why is heaven essential to the faithful Christian?

What was the purpose of their doing these things?  
What would it prove?  
Why would their prayers in Christ's name be granted?  
What does it mean to pray in the name of Christ?  
Why will people who love Christ keep his commandments?  
What did he promise to do for those who thus obey him?  
What was the Lord's purpose in saying all of these things to his disciples?

**The Way Pointed Out**

Where was Jesus going and by what route?  
Why did he tell the disciples that they knew the way?  
In what manner is Thomas pictured in the Book of John?  
Of whom is he a fair representative today?

**Lesson VI—February 5, 1961**

**THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES**

**Lesson Text**

**John 15:1-11**

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the

branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the Are, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.

9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as

I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them."* (Matt. 7:20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 16-20.

### Daily Bible Readings

January 30. M.....	Unfruitful Tree Cut Down (Luke 13: 6-9)
January 31. T.....	Barren Fig Tree Cursed (Matt. 21: 18-22)
February 1. W.....	God's People His Vineyard (Isa. 5: 1-7)
February 2. T.....	Fruits of Righteousness (Phil. 1: 3-11)
February 3. F.....	Fruitfulness of the Righteous (Psalm 1: 1-6)
February 4. S.....	Fruitbearing in Old Age (Psalm 92: 6-15)
February 5. S.....	Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16-26)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, as they left the upper room.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his eleven disciples.

### Introduction

It is fair to assume from John 14: 31 that Jesus and the disciples left the upper room, where they had eaten the passover supper and where the Lord's supper had been instituted, following the remarks which are recorded in chapter fourteen. There is nothing in the text to indicate just where they went from there; but since they were at the garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the mount of Olives less than a mile from Jerusalem (cf. Acts 1: 12), a little while later, it is possible that they began the leisurely walk to the garden when they left the upper room. Commentators, however, are not agreed regarding this, and there is no way for us to be sure about it.

Likewise, there is no way for us to know for certain what prompted the remarks regarding the vine and the branches. Some have thought that the discourse grew out of the use of wine at the suppers just referred to; others, that the tendrils of a vine had crept into the room which they had just left; while still others surmise that they may have passed a vine as they walked along, or saw an engraving which suggested the topic. There are many other ideas regarding this question, but in the

absence of any definite information concerning it, we should content ourselves with knowing that Jesus did teach his disciples a lesson based on this well known object of nature.

The portion of the Lord's address which is devoted to the vine and the branches is usually considered by expositors as an allegory, rather than a parable; but the average student may not consider this distinction very important. There is, however, a marked difference between the two forms of speech, and it is probably not out of place to say a few words about that difference for the benefit of those who are interested. The parable differs from the allegory in that there is in the latter a blending of the thing signified and the thing signifying, with the result that the qualities and properties of the first are attributed to the last. Thus, as in the case before us today, Christ at once identifies himself with the figure: "I am the vine." The allegory, unlike the parable, carries its own interpretation with it. The two best known allegories of John are *The Good Shepherd* and *The Vine and the Branches*. (Cf. Paul's allegory in Gal. 4: 21-31.)

### The Golden Text

*"Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them."* This is a general principle which is applicable in all relations of life. The literal use of the

expression is seen everywhere in the vegetable kingdom. The quality of the fruit indicates the quality of the plant which bears it. Jesus laid down

this universal principle: "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." (Matt. 7: 16-18.)

This illustration from nature is intended to teach a truth in the moral and spiritual realm; for Jesus was not talking primarily about trees and their fruit. But in making the application, we must be careful to take into consideration the general trend of ones' life before attempting to judge his character. Fruit in both the natural and the moral and spiritual kingdom is the natural production of that which bears it; but human action does not always have a vital con-

nection with the inner governing principles of the heart. Men sometimes act against their wills, from necessity, or in ignorance; but when one takes into account the average and spontaneous doing of one's life, it is then that he sees the real fruit which reveals his true character.

Our final destiny will depend upon the fruit we bear, perhaps not so much on the quantity, as on the quality. God requires that we be faithful rather than great. Jesus told his disciples that he chose them with the view of their bearing fruit—fruit which will endure (John 15: 16), and Paul says that we are to bear fruit in every good work, which reveals the extent of our fruitbearing (Col. 1: 10). We are also assured that God will add his blessings to our efforts, if we will do our part. (See 2 Cor. 9: 10.)

## The Text Explained

### The Union between Christ and His Disciples Illustrated

(John 15: 1-3)

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.* Here for the last time Jesus, in his training of the apostles, opens the book of nature. This great volume had furnished many illustrations for his parables and discourses during his public ministry, but it is doubtful if any other is richer in suggestion than this of the vine and its branches. As already pointed out, we have no way of knowing what suggested this lovely allegory, if indeed any material thing did, but we do know that it illustrates the living union which must exist between Christ and those who are faithful to him. The lesson which is here taught is substantially the same as that of the Lord's supper, but it is also complementary to it. Both emphasize unity, but in the supper we get the idea of spiritual nourishment, while in the vine and the branches fruit-bearing is suggested.

The Jewish nation (the church of the Old Testament, Acts 7: 38) was often spoken of as a vine (Psalm 80: 8ff.; Isa. 5: 1; Jer. 2: 21), but the people did not live a life in harmony with that emblem; they did not bring forth fruit to God. (Cf. Matt. 21: 33-43.) Now, Jesus, as it were, has

been planted in the earth like a fruit-bearing vine, to do that which the people of Israel did not do; and he is in that sense the true or genuine vine. He has been planted in the world of mankind and in the soil of human nature, so that our race may yield fruit unto the glory of God. It is possible, of course, that Jesus called himself the true, that is, the genuine vine in contrast with the material vine which may have been in the mind of his disciples. But in keeping with the fact that God is described as being the husbandman, it appears more likely that the reference is to the spiritual, to Jesus himself as the genuine Messianic vine.

*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.* Since God has planted his Son as the true vine, he will himself take care of it, removing every branch, such as Judas, which does not bear fruit, and will cleanse, that is, remove any superfluous condition which would hinder abundant fruit-bearing. This should be an impressive lesson to every member of the church. God did cut off the house of Israel because of their failure to bear fruit, and Jesus declares that his Father will do the same to every one of his followers who is unfruitful. But it

is encouraging to know that he will help every faithful disciple to bear more fruit.

*Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.* Although God as the husbandman gets the vine into the proper condition for effective fruit-bearing, it should be noted that he employs an instrument to that end, namely, the "word." (Cf. John 13: 10, 11.) When people hear, believe, and obey the word of God they are made free from sin, or, which is the same thing, they are made clean. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 37, 38; Eph. 5: 25-27; James 1: 18, 21-25.)

### Christians Can Live Only in Christ

(John 15: 4-7)

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. The practical meaning of this verse is, The Christian life is both unthinkable and impossible without Christ. The only way for one to remain clean and in position to bear fruit is to remain in Christ, and that means to do as he commands. While it is possible that Jesus may have had the defection of Judas in mind, it is certain that he was laying down a principle which must be adhered to by every person who expects to please the Lord.

The principle of the necessity of abiding in Christ may be illustrated by a well known incident in the life of Paul. He was on a ship bound for Rome which was caught in a violent storm, and all hope that any on board would be saved was taken away. It was then that "Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship." But later on, when the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." This word of warning did not lessen the effect of the promised salvation; for the men heeded the warning and no life was lost. (Read Acts 27: 1-44.)

In emphasizing that his people

must abide in him, Jesus is speaking of our spiritual relation to him and of our spiritual life and work. He is the living fountain of all our spiritual energies, and anyone who is severed from him can have no spiritual life and can accomplish no good. Anything which anyone can do in the service of God is the result of the living spirit of Christ which is poured into the human heart, thereby supplying him with energy whereby he lives and works. Paul taught the same general truth in 1 Cor. 12: 12-27.

*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* In verse 1, Jesus declares that he is the true vine, and he now gives the practical application of the relation of the vine to the branches. As long as the branch abides in the vine, God will see to it that it bears fruit; but if it is severed from the vine, there is nothing for it to do but to wither and die.

Various and sundry efforts have been made to show that the branches are the different religious denominations of our day; but if anyone will only read verse 6 of our text, he will see that *individuals* and not groups are the branches. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." The Christian religion, in the final analysis, deals with the individual rather than with the group. "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that *each one* may receive the things done in the body, according to what *he* hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5: 10; cf. Rev. 3: 2, 4.)

In commenting on the severed branch, Edward Hastings notes that every preacher of the gospel is taught sooner or later, however slow and reluctant he is to learn, the lesson of his own impotence—"for apart from me ye can do nothing." The preacher may set out with laudable ambitions, and perhaps a fairly high opinion of what he can achieve for the kingdom of God; he may have confidence in his way of putting the truth, and in

this or that method of Christian work. He no doubt has a measure of faith in Christ and a looking to him for blessings, but mingled with all this there is much of the self-confidence of youth and what the Bible calls "trust in an arm of flesh." But the conscientious preacher, and any other Christian for that matter, will eventually come to see that he is powerless to do an effective work without Christ. (Cf. Phil. 4: 13.)

The final punishment of the unfruitful and severed branch will be complete. The work of severing the wicked from among the good is not left to men, but to God. (See verse 2.) The Lord expects men to do what they can to keep the two separated, but human fallibility makes it impossible for this to be done in its completeness. This work will be assigned to the angels in the final day. (See Matt. 13: 47-50.)

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* Here we learn something of the great results which come from our abiding in Christ. We also see something of the place in his "words" in the process. No one can abide in Christ and have Christ abide in him who ignores that which Christ teaches. (Cf. Matt. 28: 20; Acts 2: 42.) But if the conditions which are named are met, the Christian has access to God for any blessing which he may desire or need. This is true because the mutual abiding involves such intimate union and harmony with the Divine that nothing will be asked which is out of harmony with the mind of Christ and the will of God. (Cf. Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer.

### The End in View

(John 15: 8-11)

*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.* Although the vine is prominent and of prime importance, it is a fact worthy of note that the vine alone cannot produce fruit. If the branches maintain their connection with the vine and are healthy and vigorous, an abundance of fruit may be expected. This verse

emphasizes the great responsibility of the individual disciples. (Cf. Matt. 5: 13-16.) Albert Barnes points out three reasons why fruit-bearing glorifies God. (1) It shows the excellency of his law which requires it. (2) It shows the power of his word in the lives of his people. (3) It shows that in so doing man again becomes like God in whose image he was originally made. Fruit-bearing is proof of the reality of discipleship—literally, "so shall ye become my disciples." Christian discipleship implies progress and growth. (Cf. John 8: 31.)

*Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide in my love.* From the outward evidence of union with Christ, shown by fruit-bearing, Jesus next turns to the inward bond of union which is the cause of the fruitfulness, namely, love. This divine principle has been compared to the sap which passes back and forth between the vine and the branches, and it is kept vital and active by the practical means of obedience. Jesus likens his love for his disciples to the love which the Father has for him, which, of course, is the greatest love possible; and he bids his followers to remain in his love. It is not out of place to call attention to a statement which John made earlier regarding the love of Jesus for his disciples. See John 13: 1. His love for them was great enough for him, in the face of the tragedy of the cross, to humble himself that he might show them the way to true greatness.

*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* Earlier in this discourse Jesus had said, "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." (John 14: 23, 24.) It is easy to see from these statements that nothing short of loving obedience is acceptable to God. It was by this means that Jesus abides in the Father's love, and that is the standard which is laid down for us. Obedience alone is not

enough; there must be loving obedience. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3; cf. 2 Thess. 2: 10.) The source of all true obedience is love; or, as someone has said, love is the hidden fountain, while obedience is the visible stream. There is no love worthy of the name which does not obey.

*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.* It was pointed out in the previous lesson that the purpose of the discourse which Jesus delivered to his disciples was to comfort them, and here he tells them that he wants them to have a joy corresponding to his, the joy which comes from perfect obedience.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Where were the words of this lesson probably spoken?  
What may be said regarding the probable reason for the Lord's speaking on the subject now under consideration?  
What form of speech did Jesus use in speaking of the vine and the branches?  
What is the principle difference between a parable and an allegory?  
What are the two well known allegories found in John?

#### The Golden Text

What is the nature of the statement of the golden text?  
To what is the principle applicable? Name some examples.  
What should always be taken into consideration in determining character?  
What effect will fruit-bearing have on our final destiny? Why?

#### The Union between Christ and his Disciples Illustrated

What use did Jesus make of nature in his teaching? Cite some examples.  
What can you say regarding his lesson based on the vine and the branches?  
What particular thing is illustrated by it?  
How is this lesson related to that of the Lord's supper?  
What did Jesus mean by calling himself the vine?  
In what sense is God the husbandman?  
What are his principal duties as such?  
Why is this lesson so important to us?  
In what way are the Lord's people made clean?  
Christians Can Live Only in Christ  
What important lesson did Jesus teach regarding our relation to him?

What incident in the life of Paul illustrates this principle? Show that this is true.

Why is it so necessary that we abide in Christ?  
How did Jesus apply the relation of the vine and the branches to his disciples?  
What are the branches?  
Give reasons for your answer.  
With whom is the religion of Christ primarily concerned? Why?  
Show the futility of trying to serve God apart from Christ.  
What is said regarding the final end of the severed branch?  
Who will have the responsibility of separating the good from the bad?  
What great result does Jesus say will come from our abiding in him?  
Why is the Christian assured that all of his prayers will be answered?

#### The End in View

What fact shows the great worth of the branches?  
Why is it true that God is glorified by fruit-bearing?  
What does Christian discipleship always imply?  
What is the real cause of our fruit-bearing?  
To what has the principle of love been compared?  
To what does Jesus liken his love for us?  
What is absolutely necessary in order for one to abide in Christ?  
Why isn't obedience alone sufficient?  
Why is it impossible for one to love God without obeying him?  
How did Jesus illustrate the manner of our abiding in him?  
Why did Jesus speak these words to his disciples?

## Lesson VII—February 12, 1961

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### Lesson Text

#### John 14:16-18; 16: 7-14

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever,  
17 *Even* the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it be-

holdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.  
18 I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you.

7 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.

8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 1: 6-8; 2:1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

- February 6. M..... Sword of Spirit the Word of God (Eph. 6: 10-20)
- February 7. T..... Witness of the Spirit (1 John 5: 6, 7)
- February 8. W..... Sin Against the Spirit (Matt. 12: 31, 32)
- February 9. T..... Spirit Confirms the Word (Heb. 2: 1-4)
- February 10. F..... Baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1: 8-2: 4)
- February 11. S..... Miraculous Gifts to End (1 Cor. 13: 8-13)
- February 12. S..... Holy Men Spake By the Spirit (2 Pet. 1: 19-21)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his eleven disciples.

Introduction

Jehovah is revealed in the Bible as a Triune Being, but that does not mean that there were three independent persons who coexisted from eternity. Only God, as an independent Being, has always existed. (Cf. Psalm 90: 1, 2.) The other two Persons who were associated with him in the "beginning" were his Spirit and his Word. They were integral parts of Jehovah, and could no more be separated from him than the spirit and means of expressing himself can be divorced from a normal living man. (Cf. James 2: 26.) God, his Spirit, and his Word are the three who make up that which is often referred to as the Trinity.

Those who are familiar with the Scriptures are aware of the distinction which is made between God as a spiritual Being (cf. John 4: 24) and his Spirit which may be referred to as his very life principle and the divine energy by which he has always carried on his diverse activities. (Cf. Gen. 1: 2; Job 26: 13; Psalm 104: 30; Luke 1: 34, 35.) Je-

sus himself, while here upon the earth, was subject to the Spirit and was enabled by him to do his work. (See Mark 1: 12; Acts 10: 38; Matt. 12: 28; Luke 4: 14-21.) The expression "Holy Spirit" (capital "H") is not found in the Old Testament. (Cf. Psalm 51: 11; Isa. 63: 10, 11.) The Spirit in these passages is referred to as "holy" because it is the Spirit of God who is himself holy. (Cf. 1 Pet. 1: 15, 16.)

Throughout the Old Testament period God is represented as dealing with men by his Spirit (cf. Gen. 6:3; Num. 11: 17, 25, 29; Hag. 2: 5), and the same is true in the New Testament; but after the Word became flesh (John 1: 14), the term "the Holy Spirit" is the usual title which is given to God's Spirit. The impersonal aspect of the Spirit is dropped, and "he," rather than "it," along with the Father and the Son, is regarded as a distinct Person, whose special work is to bring to fulfillment in human experience the total meaning of Jesus Christ as God's Son and Redeemer of the world. The Holy Spirit

is distinctly called God (Acts 5: 3, 4), and references are made to him which clearly identify him with God. (Cf. Isa. .6: 9, 10; Acts 28: 25f.; Jer. 31: 31-34; Heb. 10: 15f.; 2 Cor. 3: 17, 18.) (It is well to note just here

that the Son is also called God. See Isa. 9: 6; Psalm 24: 8; Tit. 2: 13. The meaning of all this is that God, his Spirit, and his Word are fundamentally one, while they are referred to as three Persons.)

### The Golden Text

*"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* If we will keep in mind a few simple facts as they are set forth in the Bible, it will be much easier for us to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of human redemption. (1) God's Word became flesh and appeared in history as Jesus Christ; and when it is said that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5: 19), the statement is literally true; for Jesus Christ originally existed in the form of God—he was God. (See Phil. 2: 6.) The Son of God was no more created than God was, and he never existed apart from God. (Cf. John 1: 18; 3: 13.) The Word of God was personified and is known in the New Testament as God's Son.

(2) In a similar manner, the Spirit of God was personified and came to be known in the New Testament as the Holy Spirit, that is, he is now regarded as being a distinct Person. The Bible nowhere teaches that the Spirit and the Word existed from eternity *apart* from God as individual and distinct Persons, and neither

were they *created* by God. God, his Spirit, and his Word are essentially one, but in the wisdom of God he saw fit to reveal himself as a Triune Being. And so, in his plan for saving the lost, God works through his Son and his Spirit. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 18.)

When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, as affirmed in the golden text, that was the beginning of the reign of Christ and the establishment of the church. God has never left such matter to the wisdom of men, and so Divine power was given to the apostles as they began their work as the plenipotentiary ministers of the Redeemer of men. (Cf. Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 8.) The authority for binding and loosing, or the forgiving and retaining of sins, had been placed in their hands; and this would require the power of God to guide them in their work. (See Matt. 16: 19; John 20: 21-23.) They therefore spoke on the occasion now before us, as the Spirit gave them utterance. This divine guidance continued until the revelation was completed and the church became a fullgrown man. (See 1 Cor. 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-16.)

### The Text Explained

#### The Holy Spirit Promised

(John 14: 16-18)

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.* It should be kept in mind that the purpose of the discourse which Jesus delivered to his disciples the last night he was with them was for the purpose of encouraging and strengthening them. Just before the words of this part of the text were spoken, Jesus had assured his followers that their prayers would be granted, contingent,

of course, upon their loving obedience. With that kind of an attitude toward him, Jesus told his disciples that he would request the Father to give them *another* Comforter, who would remain with them forever. The term "another" implies that Christ himself was their Comforter; but since he was about to leave them, they would need another one who could abide with them.

The original word for "Comforter" is used five times in the New Testament, four times in the gospel of John (14: 16, 26; 15: 26; 16: 7), and once in his first epistle (2: 1). It is always translated "Comforter" in the gospel of John, but it is rendered "Advocate" in the epistle. The

Greek term is a compound word and means to call to one's side, as, for example, an advocate, counselor, helper, or one who pleads his cause. The word "Paraclete" is a transliteration of the original *parakletos*. This compound word is from *para*, to the side of, and *kaleo*, to summon. Greek scholars tell us that the term "Comforter" is not the best rendering. Too many people think of "comfort" as *soothing*, whereas, the idea in the New Testament is that of *bracing* or *making strong*. This, apparently, was its meaning when the term was first used by Wickliffe to translate the Greek into English.

That both Christ and the Holy Spirit are helpers who are available to the Christian may be seen by reading the following passages: "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2: 1.) "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8: 26, 27.)

The Comforter is identified by Jesus as "the Spirit of truth." (Cf. 15: 26; 16: 13) The Holy Spirit is evidently called the Spirit of truth, because of his relation to the truth. (Cf. 1 John 4: 6.) The reason why the world cannot receive the Spirit is because it is not prepared for such a holy Guest. (Cf. Acts 5: 32.) The people on Pentecost heard and saw the result of the giving of the Spirit on that occasion (Acts 2: 33); and when those who were "pricked in their heart" by Peter's sermon and asked what to do, Peter told them to take the necessary steps to get their sins forgiven, and assured them that they, too, would receive the Holy Spirit according to promise; for the promise included as many as are called unto God. (Read Acts 2: 37-39; cf. Gal. 3: 14.) The Holy Spirit dwells only in sanctified temples and places of worship. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19, 20.)

*I will not leave you desolate: I*

*come unto you.* The original term for "desolate" literally means *orphans*. (See marginal note.) It is found only one other time in the New Testament, James 1: 27, where it is translated "fatherless." The word "orphan," in fact, is but a transliteration of the original Greek term—*orphanos*. Jesus had but a little while earlier referred to the disciples as "little children," and it was but natural that he should assure them that he would not leave them orphans. (See John 13: 33.) Barrett calls attention to the fact that the word was used also of disciples left without a master.

### A Threefold Ministry

(John 16: 7-11)

*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.*

During the course of the discourse which Jesus was delivering to his disciples, he had been touching upon the fact that he was going to leave them and return to the Father; and in the verses which immediately precede this section of our lesson, he had made known to them some of the hardships which they would face; but he wanted them to know that he understood. In other words, Jesus at this time expressed in plain words that which he had been implying during the course of his talk with them.

Not only was Jesus leaving his disciples in a cold and wicked world, he was also giving them a seemingly impossible task, that of winning the world for God. The forces arrayed against them were powerful and deeply entrenched; and the immediate prospect which these humble followers faced was one of cruel and bitter persecution. And then Jesus added, "But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart"; and it was then that he explained to them why it was expedient for them that he leave them, and what the specific work of the Holy Spirit would be. This work, as outlined by Jesus, was directly concerned with those who had rejected Christ while he was upon the earth, but the principle involved is applicable to all ages and covers all

the sins of men. It will be well for us to keep this wider view in mind as we consider the following verses in this section.

*And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.*

The world as such knows nothing of sin (cf. Rom. 7: 7), and yet it is the root of all that from which it suffers. Sin does not consist merely in bad actions, although it does express itself in these. Sin is a corruption of the inner man, which calls for a thorough change of disposition, and a profound renewing of the thoughts, affections, and will. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17; Tit. 3: 5, 6; Rom. 12: 2.) Jesus says that the Spirit will convict, that is, convince people that they are guilty of sin.

Righteousness, in the broad sense, is the state of one who is such as he ought to be; the condition which is acceptable to God. When used with reference to Christ, his perfect moral purity or sinlessness is meant. The world had rejected Christ, but now it must see that he and what he stood for are alone acceptable to God. Christ returned to the Father, which shows that he was acceptable to God; and only those who are identified with Christ will meet with God's approval. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 30; 2 Cor. 5: 21.) It is the Holy Spirit who shows men what the righteousness is which is acceptable to God. (Cf. Rom. 10: 1-10; 1: 16, 17.)

The world itself has been accustomed to sitting in judgment, rather than being judged; but now that Christ has been victorious over Satan, the prince of the world, the world must be made to see that it must itself submit to the judgment of the Lord. (Cf. Matt. 28: 18; John 5: 22, 23.) All men must be made to see that none is acceptable to God, except those who do as Christ has authorized; all others are workers of iniquity, and as such they will be condemned. (See Matt. 7: 21-23.) The work of convincing men of judgment is also the work of the Spirit.

The purpose of convicting or convincing men of sin, righteousness, and

judgment is to lead them to God, or, which is the same thing, to bring about their conversion. Conversion involves three basic changes—viz., (1) a change of heart, which is brought about by faith (Acts 15: 9; 1 Pet. 1: 22, that is, obedient faith, cf. John 3: 36); (2) a change of life, which is brought about by repentance (Matt. 21: 28-32; Luke 15: 17-20; 2 Cor. 7: 10; Matt. 3: 8); and (3) a change of state, from without to within the kingdom (Col. 1: 13), which is brought about by baptism (Gal. 3: 26, 27). To convict one of sin, righteousness, and judgment, then, is designed to produce faith and repentance, and to lead the penitent believer to obey the Lord in baptism. (Cf. Acts 2: 36-41; 3: 19.)

While the text says that the Holy Spirit would do the work of convicting, it does not say that he would do it independent of any medium. There is, in fact, no recorded instance in all the New Testament of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the conversion of a sinner to Christ. The question now before us is not of *power*, but of fact; not what the Holy Spirit could do in effecting a conversion, but what he actually did do, or what the Bible says he does. There is not in the entire New Testament any evidence that the Holy Spirit now saves or has ever saved a single sinner in any other way than by purifying his heart and regulating his whole life through the influence of that faith which works through love (Gal. 5: 6), and which in all cases depends on the testimony of the Scriptures (Rom. 10: 17; Acts 14: 1; John 20: 30, 31).

### **An Infallible Guide**

(John 16: 12-14)

*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* Many of the things which pertain to the gospel were, at the time Jesus spoke, beyond the comprehension of the apostles, largely because the cardinal facts upon which it rests had not yet been developed. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) It appears therefore that Jesus did not discuss many things which they would learn later, lest in doing so he should confuse their minds. The untaught, or those whose minds are filled with other ideas,

cannot get the full benefit of teaching until they are somewhat cleared. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 1-3; Heb. 5: 11-14.)

*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.* This is to say that the disciples would lose nothing because they were not then prepared to receive the "many things" which Jesus still had to say unto them; for all of them, as well as things to come would be revealed to them by the Spirit who was to be with them during their ministry.

The original word for "guide" means to conduct or to *lead along a way*. It is the word which the eunuch used when he asked Philip, "How can I, except some one should *guide* me?" (Acts 8: 31.) Jesus makes it plain that the work of the Spirit would be to see that the disciples understood the truth which already existed, rather than to speak

the truth himself. Jesus had already declared that he is the truth (John 14: 6), that is, all truth resides in him. The Spirit would, therefore, speak nothing new or different from his teaching: "for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak."

It was pointed out earlier in this lesson that Jesus himself, while he was upon the earth, was subject to the Spirit and was enabled by him to do his work. But when all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Jesus, it then became the mission of the Spirit to reveal the truth as men were able to receive it, and to bring to fulfillment in human experience the total meaning of Jesus Christ as God's Son and the Redeemer of the world. This is what Jesus meant when he said to his disciples, "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." The term "declare" means to announce or make known. The same word is translated "rehearsed" in Acts 14: 27. "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"; and the Spirit declared or rehearsed it.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Discuss the biblical teaching regarding Jehovah as a triune Being.  
Who are the three Beings in the so-called "Trinity"?  
What distinction is made in the Bible between God and his Spirit?  
What was the relation between Christ and the Spirit during the days of his flesh?  
When did the Holy Spirit come to be regarded as a distinct person?  
Give reasons for your answer.

#### The Golden Text

What are some of the basic facts which will help us to understand the work of the Holy Spirit?  
Why did the Holy Spirit come on the day of Pentecost?  
How long did the Spirit continue his miraculous ministry?

#### The Holy Spirit Promised

Under what circumstances did Jesus make this promise to his disciples?  
What is implied in the expression "another Comforter." Discuss fully.  
What is the meaning of "Comforter" as used by John?  
Discuss the passages which show that both Christ and the Holy Spirit are helpers to Christians.  
Why is the Spirit called "the Spirit of truth"?

Why can't the world receive the Holy Spirit?  
Where does the Spirit dwell today, so far as the earth is concerned?  
What did Jesus mean by saying that he would not leave his disciples desolate?

#### A Threefold Ministry

Why was it expedient for Jesus to leave his disciples?  
What earthly conditions would make the presence of the Spirit essential?  
What did Jesus say that the Spirit would do when he came?  
Does his threefold ministry include people today?  
Give reasons for your answer.  
What is the meaning and use of the term "convict"?  
What does it mean to convict one of sin?  
What is righteousness? and how are people convicted of it?  
Why was it necessary to convict the world of judgment? and what Judgment?  
What was the practical purpose of this "convicting"?  
What does conversion involve? and how are the conditions met?  
Show how this was true in the case of those who personally rejected Christ, as stated in Acts, chapter 2 and 3.  
How does the Holy Spirit do his work?

#### An Infallible Guide

Why was Jesus not willing to speak to his disciples about "many things"?  
Is this principle still applicable today?  
Give reasons for your answer.

What assurance did Jesus give the disciples regarding the "many things"?  
 In what sense would the Spirit guide them into all truth?  
 What does this teach regarding the relation of the Spirit to the truth?

In what way did Jesus say the Spirit would glorify him?  
 What is the significance of the term "declare" in verses 13 and 14?  
 How did the truth come to be? and how do we know that we have it?

Lesson VIII—February 19, 1961

JESUS PROMISES THE DISCIPLES JOY AND PEACE

Lesson Text

John 16:20-33

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me no question. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.

25 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.

26 In that day ye shall ask in my

name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you;

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

28 I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.

29 His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying.

30 Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou earnest forth from God.

31 Je'sus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you." (John 14: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 16:15-19.

Daily Bible Readings

- February 13. M.....Peace That Passeth Understanding (Phil. 4: 1-7)
- February 14. T.....Rejoice In the Lord (Phil. 3: 1-16)
- February 15. W.....Death to Be Destroyed (1 Cor. 15: 50-58)
- February 16. T.....Peace with God (Rom. 5: 1, 2)
- February 17. F.....We Shall Reap in Joy (Psalm 126: 1-6)
- February 18. S.....The Fulness of Joy (Psalm 16: 1-11)
- February 19. S.....Kept in Perfect Peace (Isa. 26: 1-3)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his eleven disciples.

Introduction

Throughout the Lord's farewell discourse to his disciples he spoke to

them of joy and peace, notwithstanding the fact that he was at that very

hour facing the greatest crisis which the world has ever seen, and he well knew that his own followers were going to be left in a cold and bitter world. But in spite of all this, he could say unto them, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful." (John 14: 27.) The expression "not as the world giveth" gives us a clue to the understanding of this remarkable statement. The world neither has the joy and peace which belong unto the Lord, nor the means of conveying the blessings to others.

When Jesus spoke to his disciples he could not offer them houses, lands, clothing, nor money, for he had "not where to lay his head"; and although he was requesting them to carry on his work for him, he could not even assure them that they would be exempted from trials and persecutions. In fact, the picture which he held up before them was full of darkness and gloom. But Jesus did have something to offer them which made all the blessings of the world, by com-

parison, fade into insignificance; he could offer them peace, a peace which the world could never take away from them. This legacy is what all other bequests aim at producing, but anyone knows that such blessings as the world has to offer can never bring such a state of being to anyone.

The Lord made these promises to his eleven disciples nearly two thousand years ago, but the same things have been extended to his people from that day until this. And even as he talked about these things to the eleven, he was being shamefully treated by the very people who should have been encouraging and helping him, but who were doing all they could to see that he suffered the most ignominious death possible. But it is a fact, worthy of our most serious consideration, that Jesus was not leaving his disciples with anger in his heart, or with a bitter feeling toward his enemies. He was in possession of the greatest of all blessings—inward peace; and it was his delight to pass this same placid disposition on to them and to all who would become his followers through their word. (Cf. Rom. 12: 17-21.)

### The Golden Text

*"I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you."* Although Jesus was soon to leave his disciples, he assured them, as we saw in the previous lesson, that he would not leave them "orphans." Jesus, indeed, did come to them after his resurrection from the dead, but that was evidently not the coming which he had reference to. He had just told them that he would pray the Father, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever"; and it is through the Spirit that both the Father and the Son dwell in his people. The Lord's earthly association with his disciples was temporary, but his presence in the Spirit is for all time. (See Eph. 3: 16, 17; John 14: 23.)

The passages just cited make it plain that the Divine Presence is a blessing which faithful Christians can have with them every day and under all circumstances. As long as loving obedience continues, the Father

and the Son will remain. The original word for "abode" in John 14: 23 is the very same word which is used for "mansions" (abiding-places, margin) in verse 2. It is therefore a permanent abode, so long as the conditions are met, but only so long. (Cf. Rev. 2: 5.) Our consciousness of the presence of these Divine Guests should fill us with a deep sense of our exalted station in life, and should inspire within us a greater determination to make their abode with us pleasing to them. In the words of Maltbie D. Babcock,

I need not journey far  
This dearest Friend to see.  
Companionship is always mine;  
He makes his home with me.

I envy not the Twelve;  
Nearer to me is he.  
The life he once lived here on  
earth  
He lives again in me.

## The Text Explained

### First Sorrow, Then Joy

(John 16: 20-22)

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* These statements were literally fulfilled when Jesus was tried and crucified. It is difficult to understand how any professed servant of the Lord can rejoice at the suffering and death of anyone; but one has only to read the four gospel records in order to see that that is precisely what happened in the case of Jesus. (Cf. Luke 22: 3-5.) It is, of course, easy to see why the friends of Christ would weep and lament as a result of that which was done to him.

The Lord, however, in his words of encouragement to his disciples, assured them that their sorrows would be turned into joy. This, apparently, does not mean simply that their sorrow would be followed by joy, but rather that the very events which would cause overwhelming grief would later be looked upon as the basis for superlative rejoicing. We do know, in the light of the later record, that this is what actually did happen. (Cf. Luke 24: 52, 53; Gal. 6: 14.)

*A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.* This is a common Old Testament image of "sorrow issuing in joy." (Cf. Isa. 21: 3; 66: 7.) While it appears that Jesus intended these words simply as an illustration of what he had just said about the sorrow of the disciples being turned into joy, many commentators hold that the analogy has a deeper meaning. Barrett notes that it belongs to the Old Testament and must be understood in the light of such passages as Isa. 26: 16-20; 66: 7-14. He continues, "In these passages the messianic salvation which relieves the affliction of the people is compared to the relief and joy of childbirth, and from them (and like passages) was drawn the later Jewish doctrine of the 'travail pains of the Messiah,' a period of

trouble which must intervene before the final consummation. The significance of these facts is that the death and resurrection of Jesus were described in language which is properly eschatological; that is, John treats them as types and anticipations of eschatological events. The resurrection means, in an anticipatory way, the realization of the messianic salvation." (See also Alford.) Johnson gives quotations from other commentators, but the student should endeavor to reach his own conclusion in the light of the facts in the record.

*And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.* (Cf. verse 19.) The "therefore" seems to leave no doubt that Jesus was using the figure of suffering as the path which was necessary to joy. In verse 19 Jesus had referred to their seeing him, but here he told them that he would see them again, an obvious reference to his appearances to them between his resurrection and ascension. It is a matter of record that the disciples did rejoice when they saw Jesus after his resurrection, and no one can read the history of the church during the first century of its existence without being convinced that the followers of Jesus did have a joy which even the bitterest persecutions could not take away from them. (Cf. Acts 7: 59, 60; 16: 22-25; 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

### Prayer in the Name of Christ

(John 16: 23-28)

*And in that day ye shall ask me no question.* "That day" evidently refers to the Christian dispensation. During the time that they had been with Jesus, they frequently asked him questions, but their slowness of comprehension often made it impossible for them to understand the action and teaching of their Master. But when the Spirit came and brought to their remembrance that which Jesus had said, and also guided them into all truth, there was no need for them to ask questions as they had done during the Lord's earthly ministry.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my*

*name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.* During the earlier part of his ministry, Jesus had taught his disciples to pray, but he did not teach them to pray in his name. But after he made his great sacrifice and became the mediatorial High Priest, all approaches to the Father, as well as all answers which the Father would give, had to be in the name of Christ. (Cf. 1 Tim. 2: 5; John 14: 6.)

Every prayer which we offer to God must be in and through the name Jesus Christ our Lord; but that does not mean that we merely repeat these words at the close of our prayers. That could be done without realizing at all the significance of the expression. Empty and meaningless phrases have no place in the prayers of those who are guided by the teaching of Jesus. In order for a prayer to be in the name of Christ, it must be prompted by his mind and in reliance on the bond which binds us to him. Therefore, to conclude our prayers with the words "through Jesus Christ our Lord" is very significant; and we may be sure, in the light of the text now under consideration, that these words, if properly used, will mean the difference in having our prayers answered or rejected. No one can pray in the name of Christ, and at the same time pray contrary to God's will; for he always wants God's will to be done.

Fellowship with God through prayer, along with the satisfaction of knowing that their prayers were being heard and answered by a loving Father, would be and is now a source of great joy to the Lord's people. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Pet. 1: 6-9.)

*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.* It was pointed out in the lesson on *Jesus the Good Shepherd* that the word which is here translated "dark sayings" (parables, margin) is not the usual New Testament work for *parable*. There are no parables in the Book of John, in the usual meaning of that term. "These things" probably refer to the enigmatical and difficult to understand remarks which Jesus used in his final discourse to his disciples. They are in contrast with "shall tell you plainly of the Father." All of these matters would be cleared up when the Spirit came to them.

*In that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.* The expression "in that day," as in verse 23, evidently refers to the dispensation which began on the Pentecost of Acts 2, but in verse 23 the reference is to asking questions regarding the life and teaching of Jesus, while in verse 26 the reference is to the disciples' praying; and the Lord informs them that it will not be necessary for him to "request" (see marginal note) the Father to listen to and grant their petitions; for the Father himself loves them, because of their love for his Son and their faith in his divine origin. This does not mean that Jesus will not pray for his disciples (cf. Rom. 8: 34; Heb. 7: 25; 1 John 2: 1, 2); that is not the point of his remarks to them here. What he said to them was that he did not have to entreat God to hear their own prayers; for "the Father himself, of his own accord, loves you, and needs no prompting from me." It has been said that verse 28 contains "a simple and grand summary of Christ's entire life, his incarnation, and his destiny."

### A Warning against Self-Reliance

(John 16: 29-33)

*His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying. Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this*

we believe that thou earnest forth from God. In order to get the force of that which the disciples said in these verses, we should go back and read verses 16-19. The disciples had failed to understand the Lord's statement in verse 16, and they apparently discussed the matter among themselves in the absence of Jesus. But in verse 28 Jesus restated the proposition of verse 16 in plainer language, and the disciples immediately understood his meaning, and hence their remark about his plainness of speech.

And then in verse 30 the disciples said, "Now know we that thou knowest all things," an obvious reference to the fact that Jesus had read their minds, that is, he showed them that he knew what they were discussing in verses 17-19, even though they did not think that he heard them. This convinced them that Jesus understood their doubts, and they therefore said that it was not even necessary for anyone to ask him to resolve their difficulties. It was on the basis of this miraculous insight of Jesus into their very thinking that led them to confess their faith in his having come from God. The Lord's full answer to their difficulty is found in verses 20-28.

*Jesus answered them, Da you now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.* Although the disciples had confessed their faith in the divinity of Jesus, he knew that it was genuine only as far as it went. There were perils in front of them concerning which they were entirely ignorant, and they would be strong enough to cause their faith in him to vanish, as each one of them sought his own

safety. A few months earlier, Peter had confessed his faith in Jesus, but when the Lord mentioned the fact that he was soon to be killed, Peter immediately rebuked him. The disciples had more to learn before their faith would become reliable for all eventualities.

There was nothing feeble nor sentimental about the manner in which Jesus accepted his loneliness. He knew that his Father was with him. The desertion of the disciples would deeply affect him, but it would be necessary for him to accept his loneliness deliberately, because of his great love for the fallen race—a loneliness which he would endure in making possible the salvation of mankind. The feeling of loneliness is not an uncommon emotion; and there are many today who bewail what they think is such a fate in their own lives, when it is nothing more than being the victims of diseased sensibility. But before anyone has the right to assume a parallel between his feelings and those of Jesus, he must be very sure that the separation between him and his fellows is due to the elevation of his character and the things which he is doing for righteousness' sake. (Cf. 2 Tim. 4: 16-18.)

*These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* Plummer notes that the ministry of Jesus ends as his life began, with a message of peace. (Cf. Luke 2: 14.) "These things" refer to the discourse which began in the upper room, and which he was then concluding. He wanted them to understand what was before them, and to assure them of the unfailing source of peace. He had overcome the world, and all who follow him are assured of the same victory.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

How do you account for the facts that Jesus spoke of joy and peace in the face of the cross?

How does the world give peace?

How does Jesus give that blessing?

In what sense is the Lord's promise applicable to us?

What is the peace which Christ gives?

### The Golden Text

What did Jesus mean by saying that he would not leave his disciples desolate? In what sense would he come to them? How does the Lord dwell with his people today?

What effect should this great truth have upon us?

### First Sorrow, Then Joy

What effect did the death of Christ have upon the disciples and the world?

How do you account for professed fol-

lowers of the Lord rejoicing at the suffering of others?  
 In what way would the sorrow of the disciples be turned into joy?  
 How did Jesus illustrate this truth?  
 When did Jesus see his disciples "again"?  
 What joy did they have which could not be taken away from them?

**Prayer in the Name of Christ**

What did Jesus mean by "that day"?  
 Why ask him no question then?  
 Why is it necessary to pray through the name of Christ?  
 What does it mean to ask through his name?  
 Is it possible to pray through the name of Christ without using that expression?  
 Give reasons for your answer.  
 What will one always do when he prays through the name of Christ?  
 In what way would praying in the name of Christ bring great joy?  
 Discuss Peter's application of this great truth.  
 What did Jesus mean by speaking in "dark sayings"?  
 Why did he speak to his disciples in that way?

What did Jesus mean by "these things"?  
 What did he mean by saying that he would not pray the Father for them?  
 Why did the Father love the disciples of Jesus?  
 Does Jesus pray for his people now?  
 Give reason for your answer.  
 In what way did Jesus summarize his entire life, mission, and destiny?

**A Warning against Self-Reliance**

Against what background did the disciples make their remarks of the section?  
 What did they mean by saying that he was speaking plainly?  
 Why did they say that no one needed to ask Jesus?  
 On what did they base their faith in his deity?  
 What reply did the Lord then make to them?  
 What did this show regarding their faith?  
 What reference did Jesus make to his loneliness?  
 What is the difference between his loneliness and that which we sometimes profess?  
 Why did Jesus speak these things unto his disciples?

**Lesson IX—February 26, 1961**

**JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES**

**Lesson Text**

**John 17:14-26**

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.

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

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

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

21 That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us:

that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee." (John 17:1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 17:1-13.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- February 20. M..... God Hates Discord (Prov. 6: 6-19)
- February 21. T..... Unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4: 1-16)

February 22. W.....	Strife Results from False Teaching (1 Tim. 3: 6-10)
February 23. T.....	Division in Early Church (1 Cor. 3: 1-9)
February 24. F.....	Unity a Pleasant Thing (Psalm 133)
February 25. S.....	Strife, Factions, of the Devil (James 3: 13-18)
February 26. S.....	Divided Kingdom Cannot Stand (Matt. 12: 25, 26)

TIME.—A.D. 30, the night of the Lord's betrayal.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the Father.

### Introduction

After Jesus finished his last discourse to his disciples, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and uttered his great intercessory prayer. This prayer has also been called his great High-Priestly prayer, inasmuch as he was soon to enter in upon that phase of his work. But whatever one may choose to call the prayer, it is easy for us to see his purpose in uttering it. (1) He prayed for his own glorification, 1-5; (2) he prayed for his apostles, 6-19; (3) he prayed for the unity of all believers, 20-23; (4) he prayed that his disciples may be with him in eternity, 24-26.

Prayer was ordained by God, and it is his will that all his people pray unto him; and Jesus was no exception to this rule. Those who read the records of his life as they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, will see him often in prayer. "And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." (Mark 1: 35.) "And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6: 12.) He even prayed while he was on the cross. (See Luke 23: 34.) It was after he

had finished a season of prayer, that his disciples asked him to teach them to pray. "And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11: 1.)

The Lord's example should inspire us to pray more; and we will do so, if we truly realize our relation to God. No one can read the prayer which Jesus prayed for his disciples without coming to see his great love for them; but there is no reason for assuming that he loved them any more than he loves his people now. This is implied in the third section of the prayer now before us. And when we realize that he prays for us, even now, it will make a tremendous difference in our lives. Paul tells us that he is at the right hand of God, and that he makes intercession for us. (See Rom. 8: 34; cf. 1 John 2: 1, 2.) Jesus told Peter on one occasion that he prayed for him, but the impetuous apostle seemed to think that he did not especially need it (Luke 22: 31-34); and many of us today appear to feel about as he did, judging from our attitude and actions.

### The Golden Text

*"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee."* (Read verses 1-5.) This is the only personal petition in the prayer of this chapter. It is not merely for strength to meet the cross, but for the power to glorify the Father by his death, resurrection, and ascension. When Jesus delivered his last public discourse (chapter 12), he discussed his approaching death; and after having completely overcome the temptation to shun the cross, he offered this petition and was answered in the following words: "Father, glorify thy name. There

came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

It is only by complete obedience to God that his name is glorified, and when Jesus has the strength to die the death which was ordained for him, and thereby make possible the salvation of the world, he will be doing God's will; and when that obedient suffering is accepted by the Father, the Son in turn will be glorified by the Father. And he will be further glorified when the Father exalts him to his former place in heaven. "And now, Father, glorify

thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (Verse 5; cf. Phil. 2: 5-11; John 13: 31, 32.)

When Jesus said, "the hour is come," he realized that the greatest crisis in history was at hand. It was the day for which all his days were made, the day when he would go to the cross and make the supreme sacrifice that others might live. It was the situation he described when

he said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." (John 12: 24.) This was the time when he needed the Father, so that he could do all that self-sacrifice demanded; and if the Father would enable him to perform his part, the result would be the Father's glory; for, according to the text, he said, "Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee."

## The Text Explained

### The Lord's Ideal for Believers

(John 17: 14-19)

*I have given them thy ward; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* Jesus had already mentioned the fact in this prayer that he had given God's word unto the apostles: "Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me." (Cf. 16: 16-28.) Jesus committed to the apostles the truth of his relation to the Father and of his mission to the earth, and they gladly received the message; but the result was the inevitable hatred of the world. (See 15: 18, 19.)

It has been pointed out before that Jesus and the world are diametrically opposed to each other, and he himself, earlier in his ministry, explained why the world hated him. In speaking to his brethren who did not believe in him, he said, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil." (John 7: 7; cf. 3: 17-21.) Ever since sin entered into the world, God's people have had to separate themselves from the world. This is true because, as John says, "the whole world lieth in the evil one." (See 1 John 5: 19.)

Jesus did not request the Father to take his disciples out of the world, but asked instead that they be protected from the evil one, that is, the

devil. It is best, in the providence of God, for the Lord's people and the world that they remain in it; for the world is blessed by their presence, and would be destroyed without them. (See Matt. 5: 13-16.) It is God's will therefore that his people conduct themselves in the presence of the world in such a manner as to show them the difference between good and evil. (Cf. Col. 4: 5, 6; 1 Pet. 3: 13-17.) The gospel is God's power to save, and Jesus has authorized his people to proclaim it to the entire world. (See Mark 16: 15; Col. 1: 23; 2 Tim. 2: 2.)

The Lord's petition that his disciples be kept from the evil one was evidently pleasing to the Father; for he has promised to do that very thing, as the following passages show. "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.) "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." (Rom. 8: 35-39; read also verses 31-34.) The

only power which can transfer our allegiance to the evil one is within our own selves. God will do his part to protect us; but if we are not willing to do our part, then the devil will have his way with us. Man is a free moral agent, and not even God will compel him to remain in his favor against his will.

*Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify my self, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.* The term "sanctify" is used throughout the Old Testament to express the entire dedication and consecration of both persons and things to God. Its basic idea is that of "separateness" or "apartness." (Cf. Lev. 11: 44; 1 Pet. 1: 15, 16.) It would be impossible, of course, for one to be consecrated unto God without endeavoring to live as he directs and seeking to become more like him; and it is in this sense that we think of sanctification as *holiness*. The importance of the subject may be seen from such passages as Heb. 12: 14: "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord."

The sanctification for which Jesus prayed is brought about by the truth, that is, the word of God. It is the truth which is embodied in Jesus (John 14: 6), and revealed through his teaching and activity. (Cf. 2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.) This truth both designated and separated the apostles unto their work; and it was the same will of the Father which led Christ to consecrate himself wholly to God. "I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 5: 30.) Jesus is the perfect pattern in all things to his people. (Cf. 1 Pet. 2: 21.) It is hardly necessary to say that it is impossible to sanctify any one against his will. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." (See 1 Thess. 4: 3ff.) In the prayer now before us, Jesus said, "While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

This shows that even under those circumstances the apostles still enjoyed the freedom of their will.

### "That They May All Be One"

(John 17: 20-23)

*Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.* The mission of the disciples of Christ into the world was a direct result of the mission of Christ. (See verse 18; 20. 21-23; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) The mission of the disciples of Christ is intended to make believers, and Jesus in his prayer contemplated the result which he desires, namely, a united and dedicated brotherhood. For Jesus there was no problem in the continued existence of an earthly society of believers after his resurrection; for he himself willed it and prayed for those who should be members of it. *through their word.*

The unity of the believers throughout the dispensation is not merely a matter of unanimity, nor does it mean that the members of the church lose their identity; it is strictly analogous to the unity of the Father and the Son. The Father is active in the Son (cf. John 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19), and the deeds of the Son are meaningless apart from the Father (John 12: 48-50), and indeed would be impossible (John 5: 19). And, too, the Son is in the Father, is eternally with him in the unity of the so-called Trinity, active alike in creation and redemption. The Father and the Son are one, and yet remain distinct. It is this unity, enlarged and extended so as to include faithful disciples, which makes it a triple instead of a dual unity, which must characterize all believers. The believers are one: they are also in the Father and the Son, and yet distinct from both; and are themselves the sphere of Divine activity (Phil. 2: 13). This is the highest conception of unity which is possible.

Thus it can be seen that unity of all believers in Christ is a cardinal doctrine of the New Testament. Jesus does not teach conflicting doctrines; and no one can be pleasing to him who either teaches or adheres to such.

Jesus makes it plain in the passage now under consideration that one of the expected results of the unity of believers is the conversion of the world; but it is next to useless to call upon others to accept this divine plan, while those who claim to stand upon the Bible alone ignore its teaching regarding this question. Many of the passages which are commonly used to condemn sectarian division, as that expression is generally understood, were written primarily for the purpose of correcting internal conditions in local congregations.

*And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected together into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.* The glory which is here referred to is probably the honor which God conferred upon Christ in admitting him unto union with the Father, commonly expressed by Sonship; and if so, then the Son conferred the same honor, that is, brethren or sons of God upon all believers who are in him. (Cf. 1 John 3: 1-3; Rom. 8: 29, 30.) In other words, he made us his brethren so that we might be one great household. This kind of unity will not only lead to the conversion of the world, but will also cause men to recognize both the the divine mission of Christ and the love of the Father.

#### The Desire of Christ for His Disciples

(John 17: 24-26)

*Father, I desire that they also whom hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* This appears to be the Lord's request that his disciples be finally admitted into heaven itself, where they may not only see, but actually participate in, the glory which was his before he came to the earth. (Cf. John 1: 14; Phil. 2: 5-11.) John is probably echoing this sentiment when he says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the

world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3: 1-3; cf. Col. 3: 1-4.)

*O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them, thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.* Westcott observes that the last word of this last recorded prayer for his disciples corresponds with the last word of his last discourse to them, namely, "I have overcome the world." (See John 16: 33.) Plummer notes that "these last words of Christ's mediatorial prayer sum up its purpose. They are the thread which run through all these farewell discourses. He is going away and yet abides with them. His bodily presence passes away, his spiritual presence remains for ever; not seen with the eye without, but felt, as life and strength, within. Having known Christ after the flesh; now they know him so no more: they are in Christ, a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 16, 17)."

Any one who reads the Book of Acts and the Epistles can easily see how sublimely this prayer was realized in the history of the apostles, as Geikie points out. He continues, "It was their common glory to believe that nothing could separate them from the love of God in Christ. The contrast between the dejected, fainthearted, materializing Galilean fishermen and the peasants of the Gospels, and the heroic, spiritual confessors of Pentecost and after times, is itself a miracle, great beyond all others. The illumination of soul, the grandeur of conception, the loftiness of aim, and the transformation from a lower to an infinitely higher mental and moral condition, as complete as the change from early twilight to noon, can find their only solution in the admission that they must have received the miraculous spiritual enlightenment from above, which Jesus had promised to send them."

In speaking of the last discourse of Jesus and the ensuing prayer, Barnes says, "This sublime and beautiful discourse is appropriately closed by a solemn and most affecting prayer—a prayer at once expressive of the profoundest reverence for God and the tenderest love for men—simple, grave, tender, sublime, and full of consolation. It is the model for our prayers, and with like reverence, faith, and love we should come before God. This prayer for the

church will yet be fully answered; and he who loves the church and the world cannot but cast his eyes onward to that time when all believers shall be one; when contentions, bigotry, strife, and anger shall cease; and when, in perpetual union and love, Christians shall show forth the power and purity of that holy gospel with which the Saviour came to bless mankind. Soon may that happy day

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Under what circumstances was the prayer of John 17 offered?  
Give a general outline of its contents.  
What do you know of the prayer-life of Jesus?

What effect should his example in this respect have on us?  
What regard does Jesus have for his disciples now?

#### The Golden Text

What was the only personal petition which Jesus made in this prayer?  
What did he mean by "glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee"?  
What hour did Jesus say had come?  
What must have been the effect of this realization on him?

#### The Lord's Ideal for Believers

What was the word which Jesus gave to his disciples?  
Why did the world hate them?  
What underlying reason caused the world to hate Jesus?  
Why are the Lord's people not of the world?  
Why does Jesus want his disciples to remain in the world, even now?  
What special petition did he make for them in this connection?  
What regard does the Father have respecting this plea?  
What is the basic meaning of "sanctify"?  
Discuss fully.  
On what basis did Jesus send the apostles into the world?

How may one be sanctified now?  
In what sense did Jesus sanctify himself?  
Can one be sanctified against his will?  
Give reasons for your answer.

#### "That They May All Be One"

What did Jesus expect from the mission of his disciples?  
In what way are believers made?  
In what sense did Jesus pray that his people may all be one?  
How can the Father, the Son, and believers all be in each other?  
What result did Jesus expect to come from unity?  
What can you say of the unity of the church today?  
What glory did the Father give the Son?  
How did he give that glory to his disciples?  
What result did he expect to follow the bestowal of his glory on them?

#### The Desire of Christ for His Disciples

What was the desire which Jesus expressed for his disciples?  
What did he mean by beholding his glory?  
What was his glory?  
What was John's probable reference to this in his first epistle?  
What is the relation of this prayer to the Lord's last discourse to his disciples?  
Show how its closing words sum up its general purpose.  
Was the purpose of the prayer realized in the days of the early church? Give reasons for your answer?  
What prospects do we have of its being realized in our day?

## Lesson X—March 5, 1961

### PETER'S THREE DENIALS OF CHRIST

#### Lesson Text John 18: 18-37

12 So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Je'-sus and bound him,

13 And led him to An'-nas first; for he was father in law to Ca'-ia-phas, who was high priest that year.

14 Now Ca'-ia-phas was he that

gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 And Si'-mon Peter followed Je'-sus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with

Je'-sus into the court of the high priest;

16 But Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

18 Now the servants and the officers were standing *there*, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves; and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

19 The high priest therefore asked Je'-sus of his disciples, and of his teaching.

20 Je'-sus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard *me*, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said.

22 And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Je'-sus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Je'-sus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

24 An'-nas therefore sent him bound unto Ca'-ia-phas the high priest.

25 Now Si'-mon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."* (Mark 14: 29.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 18:1-11.

### Daily Bible Readings

February 27. M.....	Refuse to Do Good a Denial of God (Job 31: 16-28)
February 28. T.....	Israel Denied God (Isa. 59: 9-14)
March 1. W.....	Deny Christ; He Will Deny (Matt. 10: 32, 33)
March 2. T.....	Denied Before the Angels (Luke 12: 1-9)
March 3. F.....	Christ Cannot Deny Himself (2 Tim. 2: 1-13)
March 4. S.....	Some Will Not Deny His Name (Rev. 3: 1-8)
March 5. S.....	Christ Promised Not to Deny (Matt. 26: 31-36)

TIME.—A.D. 30, the night of the Lord's betrayal.

PLACES.—The Garden of Gethsemane and the court of the high priest.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Peter, another disciple, Annas, and those in his court.

### Introduction

All Bible readers are familiar with Peter's denials of his Lord, but not every one stops to consider the lessons which we may learn from the story. One reason for this is that most of us are content merely to sit in judgment against Peter. But simply making a target of other men's blunders is both easy and useless. It would do us all good to ask, Am I qualified to sit in judgment upon Peter? This is not to say that Peter did not sin: he did; but it was not because he was a bad man at heart. And furthermore, Jesus, the one who was affected more by Peter's deeds than any one else, had confidence in the ultimate outcome of the apostle's life. (Cf. John 1: 42; Matt. 16: 18, 19.)

It is easy to call Peter a coward, but many of those who do so have never been tested as he was. We should keep in mind that he was a follower of Christ, just as we claim to be; and so, let us ask what we would have done if we had been in his place on that eventful night. Would we have gone to the high priest's house when the soldiers led Jesus there? or would we have been with the nine disciples who were next heard of only when all danger had passed? It is easy for one to say "I am a Christian" when the profession brings gain to him and covers him with social respectability; but it is something else when the test means

the sorrowful vale, the crown of thorns, and the cross.

So, instead of merely condemning Peter, we should make an effort to learn something of the reasons for his fall. In the words of another, "let us stand by his side and ask him to tell us over again the sorrowful tale of this great turning-point in his life; ask him to tell us of that love which looked upon him, which brought him up from the depths even to the heights again. And when a man reads of that first denial let him say, "My soul, take heed to thy-

self.' And when he reads that second denial, 'My soul, be not high-minded, but humble.' And when he reads that third denial, even with its oaths and curses, once more, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' If we are not ready to come to this story with that spirit do not let us come at all. But if we will come humble and contrite, why, then the story has many things to say to us about the danger of temptation as it comes to us in a very different form from that which we expect."

### The Golden Text

*"But Peter said unto him, Although all men shall be offended, yet will not I."* Jesus replied to Peter by saying, "Verily I say unto thee, that thou to-day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, shalt deny me thrice." But Peter "spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner also said they all." (See Mark 14: 30, 31.) Luke's account of the conversation is as follows: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you [plural, that is all the apostles], that he might sift you [plural] as wheat: but I made supplication for thee [singular, that is Peter alone], that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." (Luke 22: 31-34.)

There does not appear to be any reason for saying that Peter was not entirely sincere in all that he said. He apparently meant every word he said, and when the appropriate time presented itself to him, he used his sword to demonstrate his sincerity. (Cf. John 18: 10, 11; Luke 22: 49, 50.)

### The Text Explained

#### Jesus Taken into Custody and Peter's First Denial

(John 18: 12-18)

*So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest*

Peter's trouble was not the lack of courage, but self-confidence; and it was this last trait which threw him off his guard, and made him feel that he had no need to pray for strength; and because of this, he fell an easy victim to the tempter's stratagems. Peter had a similar experience with his over-confidence when he asked the Lord's permission to walk on the water. (See Matt. 14: 28-31.) He evidently thought that he could demonstrate greater courage than the other disciples.

But this same principle can and will operate in the life of any person today who professes to follow Christ, if he allows the spirit of self-confidence a prominent place in his life. The Saviour of men cautioned his disciples to "watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," and he added, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (See Matt. 26: 41.) And Paul warned, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10: 12; cf. 2 Pet. 3: 17.) A twin-brother to the spirit of over-confidence is that of rashness, as was seen in Peter's use of the sword; and if we are not careful to rule out self confidence, we will very likely have trouble with rashness too.

*that year.* The fact that such a formidable array of military personnel was used to arrest Jesus gives some idea of the manner in which the Jewish leaders regarded him. The "chief captain" was a commander of a cohort, that is, the tenth part of a legion, consisting normally of about six hundred men. It is hardly pro-

bable, however, that they had that many men with them when they took Jesus; but it does designate the rank of the commander they employed for the task. The original term for "seized" is the technical word for arrest.

Bible students are not agreed as to why Jesus was taken to Annas first. Some think that he underwent a kind of preliminary trial before him, but others dispute that. Edersheim notes that "we thus know absolutely nothing of what passed in the house of Annas—if, indeed, anything passed—except that Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas." Marcus Dods says that "the reason for taking him to Annas first was that he was father-in-law of the actual high priest, Caiaphas, and was a man of commanding influence. He himself had been high priest from A. D. 7-14, while five of his sons occupied the office in succession. Caiaphas held office till A. D. 37." Others note that in addition to the domestic relation which existed between Annas and Caiaphas, the former was of great wealth and influence among the Jews, and it was therefore a good policy to have his sanction and counsel before proceeding with their plan to destroy Jesus.

But many commentators, on the other hand, hold that the paragraph including verses 19-24 refers to a preliminary trial before Annas; and verse 24 seems to confirm their view. But we must not overlook the fact that John says specifically that Caiaphas "was high priest that year," and when he records the facts of the trial, he simply says, "The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching." If Caiaphas was high priest, then Annas was not. But Luke refers to the "high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (Luke 3: 2), and calls Annas the high priest—"and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas" (Acts 4: 6).

It seems fair to infer from the Old Testament law regarding the tenure of the high priestly office that it was for life, or at least as long as he was fitted to perform the duties attached to it (cf. Heb. 7: 23); and if this was true, Annas was probably regarded as the *lawful* high priest, while Caiaphas was the one who had been ap-

pointed by men. The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible says that "the law which regulated the succession to the high priesthood had come into abeyance through political confusion and foreign domination. High priests were made and unmade at the will of the rulers." If there was a preliminary trial before Annas, then John alone records it, while the other three writers deal with the one before Caiaphas. (See Matt. 26: 57ff. and the parallels in Mark and Luke.)

*Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.* . This refers to John 11: 47-53, which should be read in this connection. The remark of Caiaphas grew out of a discussion which the Jewish leaders had with reference to a plan to destroy the influence of Jesus. And as they reasoned regarding the possible outcome of the matter, Caiaphas told them that they were only manifesting their ignorance when they asked, "What do we?" and that they failed to realize that it was expedient for them that they kill Jesus, and thereby save the people from the fate which they anticipated. In other words, his idea was that expediency, rather than justice, be allowed to govern the situation. It turned out, however, that his words had a prophetic meaning which God, and not he, attached to them. And so, following the advice of Caiaphas, "from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death."

*And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without. . So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.* Those who will take the time to read the four accounts of Peter's denials will see that they differ in some of the details, but they do not clash. Each of the four writers records the Lord's prediction that Peter would deny him three times (Matt. 26: 31-35; Mark 14: 27-31; Luke 22: 31-34; John 13: 36-38); and each one also records three acts of denial (Matt. 26: 69-75; Mark 14: 66-72; Luke 22: 54-62; John 18: 15-18, 25-27).

The different circumstances under which the denials were made may be explained on the theory that Peter spoke to more than one person when he denied that he knew Christ on one or more of those occasions, and that different writers recorded different phases of the over-all denial. Each writer represents the denials as taking place in the palace of the high priest, in or near the court. If the question is raised concerning the possibility that Jesus was taken to the places of both Annas and Caiaphas, that can be explained on the hypothesis that the houses of the two priests were either adjacent to each other, or possibly apartments in the same building.

It appears that only two of the apostles followed Jesus to the house of the high priest, namely, Peter and "the other disciples." The impersonal manner in which the writer of the Fourth Gospel habitually refers to this unnamed disciples (cf. 1: 35-40; 13: 23; 21: 20-24) has led many Bible students to conclude that he was John himself. This disciple was known to the high priest and had no trouble in getting by the doorkeeper; but Peter apparently needed some one to identify him, and that is what the other disciple did for him.

*The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves; and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.* It should be noted that each of the four gospel writers mentions a maid in connection with Peter's first denial. There is no indication that she meant to harm him. John was near Jesus and was not molested, but Peter was among those who were not identified with the Lord.

This is to say that when Jesus stood before his judges on that eventful night, Peter was neither beside him to encourage him and to share his destiny, nor among those who were accusing him and clamoring for his life. Instead, he was out in the courtyard mingling with the people who were taking no active part, and was warming himself by their fire. He probably felt that he was on safe

middle ground. It is doubtful if there is any other incident on record which so perfectly portrays the territory between good and evil which so many of us often occupy. Peter's attitude on this occasion should enable us to see the despicable attitude of neutrality.

### Jesus before the High Priest

(John 18: 19-24)

*The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching.* As pointed out earlier in this lesson, Bible students are not agreed as to the identity of this high priest. Farrar and others think that he was Annas, who was known to John, and that the latter gave his own eye-witness account of what happened. If this was true, then, as already noted, John recorded that which the other three omitted, while they wrote that which John passed over, namely, the trial before Caiaphas. (Cf. Matt. 26: 57; Luke 22: 54.) Taking into account the over-all record of the men who tried Jesus, it is safe to assume that the high priest's purpose in questioning Jesus was to obtain some material out of which he could frame an accusation against him. (Cf. John 8: 6; Mark 3: 2.)

*Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said.* Jesus probably purposely ignored the question regarding his disciples, and centered attention on his own teaching. His answer emphasized the fact that he had made no effort to excite sedition and tumult. If it had been his aim to overthrow the established order and proclaim himself a political ruler, he would have trained his followers in secret and would have kept himself out of public view while formulating his plans. If the high priest and those with him had really been honest, they could have learned the truth about Jesus from those around them. They had, indeed, been told the truth, but truth was not what they wanted. (Cf. John 7: 45-52.)

*And when he had said this, one of*

*the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? This may be regarded as the Lord's commentary on his precept in Matt. 5: 39, namely, that it does not prohibit remonstrance against unjust treatment, provided it is done in the proper spirit. (Cf. Acts 23: 1-5; 1 Pet. 2: 21-23.)*

*Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. If this was a preliminary trial, it was then in order, of course, to send Jesus to the man whom the authorities recognized as the high priest, namely, Caiaphas. (See verse 13.)*

**Peter's Second and Third Denials**

(John 18: 25-27)

*Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not. Matthew and Mark say that Peter went out into the porch*

*after his first denial. It has been suggested that he probably felt the need of some fresh air! The "little while" (Luke 22: 58) between the first and second denials probably accounts for John's placing the appearance before Annas between the two. The "they" who spoke to Peter and brought forth his second denial could well include the maid of Mark (14: 69) and the man of Luke (22: 58). (Cf. Matt. 26: 71.)*

*One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?—Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew. Robertson calls this a staggering and sudden thrust which expects an affirmative answer. The fact that Peter's attempt at murder was now brought out into the open may account for his cursing and swearing (Mark 14: 71) in his third attempt to make good his denial of Jesus. John does not mention the Lord's look at Peter, not his subsequent sorrow.*

**Questions for Discussion**

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

**Introduction**

What do many people miss regarding Peter's denials of Jesus?  
What important lessons should we learn from his experience?  
What was the Lord's attitude toward him?  
How may the principles which affected Peter be applied in our lives?  
What is a good way for us to approach the subject now before us?

**The Golden Text**

Under what circumstances did Jesus tell Peter that he would deny him?  
How did Peter react to the Lord's remarks?  
Give reasons why you think, or do not think, that Peter was sincere when he said that he would not deny Jesus.  
Why, then, did he fall?  
In what way may these principles find application in our lives?

**Jesus Taken Into Custody and Peter's First Denial**

Why did the Jews want such a band of soldiers to arrest Jesus?  
Why, in your opinion, was Jesus taken to Annas first?  
What happened in the house of Annas?  
What seems to have been the condition of the high priesthood during the days of Jesus?  
What did John say regarding Caiaphas?  
What prophecy did he utter regarding Jesus? and why?  
Why did Caiaphas and the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus?

Who alone of the apostles followed Jesus to the house of the high priest?  
How do you account for the differences in the four accounts of Peter's denials of Jesus?  
Under what circumstances did Peter make his first denial?  
Who was the other disciple with Peter?  
What was the difference in the situations of the two disciples with reference to Jesus, when Peter first denied him?  
What is the ever-present danger of being on neutral ground when great issues are at stake?

**Jesus before the High Priest**

Who was this high priest? Give reasons for your answer.  
What effect does the answer to this question have on the matter of the contents of the four written records?  
Why did the high priest question Jesus? and about what?  
What answer did Jesus make? and why not discuss his disciples?  
What was the force of the Lord's reply?  
Why did the officer strike Jesus?  
What lesson do we learn from the Lord's reply to him?  
What did Annas do with Jesus? and why?

**Peter's Second and Third Denials**

Where was Peter when he made his second denial?  
Why does John place the appearance before the high priest between the first and second denials, while the other writers do not?  
Who provoked the second denial?  
Who provoked the third denial?  
Why did Peter curse and swear when he made the last denial?

## Lesson XI—March 12, 1961

## THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

## Lesson Text

## John 19: 4-9, 14-18, 25-30

4 And Pi'-late went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.

5 Je-sus therefore came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And *Pi'-late* saith unto them, Behold, the man!

6 When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*! Pi'-late saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pi'-late therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And he entered into the Prae-to'-ri-um again, and saith unto Je'-sus, Whence art thou? But Je'-sus gave him no answer.

14 Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King!

15 They therefore cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him! Pi'-late saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cae'-sar.

16 Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

17 They took Je'-sus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Gol'-go-tha:

18 Where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Je'-sus in the midst.

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Je'-sus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clo'-pas, and Mary Mag-da-le'-ne.

26 When Je'-sus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

28 After this Je'-sus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.

29 There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth.

30 When Je'-sus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us." (1 John 3: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 5:1-8.

## Daily Bible Readings

March 6. M.....	The Trial of Jesus (John 19: 4-9)
March 7. T.....	Christ's Sufferings Predicted (Isa. 53: 4-12)
March 8. W.....	The Denial of Christ (John 18: 15-27)
March 9. T.....	Christ's Voluntary Death (John 10: 7-18)
March 10. F.....	Burial of Christ (John 19: 31-42)
March 11. S.....	Christ Our Example (1 Pet. 2: 20-25)
March 12. S.....	The Cost of the Cross (Matt. 10: 34-42)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Golgotha.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Pilate, the Jewish leaders, John, the mother of Jesus, and others.

**Introduction**

After the trial of Jesus before the Jews, where he was found to be guilty of the death penalty, it was necessary for them to take him before the Roman governor to have their condemnation ratified. John reports that procedure in these words: "They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium; and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be denied, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee. Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die." (18: 28-32.)

If the whole procedure before Pilate is carefully considered, it will be seen that he made several efforts to free Jesus, but was never successful. It appears that Pilate was a capable ruler, and, as David Smith (*The Days of His Flesh*) points out, had he been set over another province, he might have proved a successful ruler. But as it was, Pilate had an imperious temper, and was disposed to rule with a high hand and compel obedience. He had greatly

misjudged the Jews, who were tenacious in their faith and quick to resent anything which seemed to be a slight upon their cherished traditions. He had in the past, according to Josephus and others, been compelled to back down a number of times in his attempts to force his way with the Jews, and that, in part at least, accounts for the manner in which they forced his hand on the occasion now before us.

It will be seen in the passage quoted above that Pilate attempted to throw the responsibility for condemning Jesus on the Sanhedrin, but they shrewdly threw the case back at him by asserting that they did not have the authority to put any man to death. And then at the mention of Galilee, Pilate thought that he saw an opportunity to shift the responsibility to Herod; but Herod, after satisfying his own curiosity and being unable to make out a case against Jesus, sent him back to Pilate. (See Luke 23: 1-12.) And then, as a further attempt to free himself of the fearful responsibility of condemning a man whom he knew to be innocent, he resorted to his custom of freeing any prisoner whom the people desired; and feeling certain that they would prefer Jesus to Barabbas, he gave them the opportunity of choosing between them, with the result that they chose Barabbas. It was following this that Pilate signed the death warrant, and ordered Jesus to be crucified.

**The Golden Text**

*"Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us."* There is no better way to learn the meaning of a great truth than by way of example. This is true in any area of life, but how much more so in the spiritual realm. The religion of Christ is based on the principle of love, and "he that loveth not abideth in death." This is to say that no man can please God whose heart and life are devoid of love. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (John 4: 7, 8.)

But no man is capable, in and of himself, of understanding the mean-

ing of love, and so John continues, "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4: 9-11; cf. John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8.)

The setting of the golden text sets forth the practical meaning of love, as seen both in the sacrifice of Christ and in the lives of his people. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth

in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. *Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth

up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 14-18.) Jesus used the cross to show his love, and so must his followers. (Cf. John 10: 17; Matt. 10: 38.)

## The Text Explained

### "Behold, the Man!"

(John 19: 4-9)

*And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man!* In order to understand some of the significance of that which was said and done, as indicated here, we should have before us that which is said in verses 1-3: "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands."

It is difficult for us to conceive of the treatment which was accorded Jesus on this occasion. Pilate had been frustrated in his attempt to get the people to choose Jesus instead of Barabbas, and so he made his fifth effort to free Jesus, this time by scourging. "And Pilate spake unto them again, desiring to release Jesus; but they shouted, saying, Crucify, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him." (Luke 23: 20-22.) It appears that the Romans were accustomed to scourging a criminal before they crucified him, but the governor's evident aim was to let the scourging suffice.

David Smith describes the chastisement in these words: "The scourge was a frightful instrument;—whip with several thongs, each loaded with acorn-shaped balls of lead or sharp pieces of bone. Six lictors took the victim, stripped him, bound him to a post, and plied the cruel lash. Each

stroke cut into the quivering flesh; the veins and sometimes the very entrails were laid bare, and often the teeth and eyes were knocked out. It is no wonder that not unfrequently the sufferer expired under the torture. The soldiers led Jesus away and scourged him; and then they took him, faint and bleeding, and compassed him with ribald mockery. Over his lacerated back they put Herod's purple robe; they platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head; and in his right hand, by way of sceptre, they put a reed; then in mock homage they knelt before him and saluted him: 'Hail! King of the Jews.' And they spat upon his face, buffeted him, and, snatching the reed from his hand, smote him on the head, at each stroke driving the thorns into his tortured brow."

There is evidence to support the contention that the addition of the mockery to the scourging went beyond the limits of Roman usage, and amounted to "superfluous barbarity." But Pilate apparently did not restrain them, and may have encouraged them; for it seems to have been his purpose to appease the Jews with this barbarous treatment of Jesus, and thereby cause them through pity, and with the satisfaction of knowing that his influence had been destroyed, to be satisfied with giving up the idea of crucifying him. Or to state the same things in other words, that which is recorded in verses 4 and 5 was an appeal to their compassion; as if to say, Surely the spectacle which you behold is enough to soften you. It was a desperate attempt on the part of Pilate, but the Jews knew that Pilate had been forced to retreat before them before, and they were in no mood to accept a compromise.

*When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take him*

*yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him.* This was not intended as a grant of permission to crucify Jesus, but was uttered in ironical mockery. Barnes notes that the statement was equivalent to this: "I am satisfied of his innocence, and shall not pronounce the sentence of death. If you are bent on his ruin — if you are determined to put to death an innocent man—if my judgment does not satisfy you—take him and put him to death *on your own* responsibility, and take the consequences. It cannot be done with my consent, nor in due form of law; and if done, it must be by *you*, without authority, and in the face of justice."

*The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.* The Jews evidently felt the force of Pilate's implied charge that they were trying to destroy an innocent man, and they sought to justify themselves on the ground that he stood clearly condemned by their law. This was the law against blasphemy. (See Lev. 24: 16; Matt. 26: 63-68.) Pilate was under no obligation to enforce the Jewish law, and it was for that reason that the enemies of Jesus did not prefer the charge of blasphemy when they brought him before the governor, but instead charged him with sedition. (See Luke 23: 1-5; John 18: 29, 30.) And so, when Pilate made his ironical statement, the Jews adduced their real reason for wanting Jesus killed.

*When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.* This was not fear of the Jews, but, apparently fear of Jesus himself. He had already been warmed by his wife to have "nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him" (Matt. 27: 19), and after hearing that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, Pilate probably was made to wonder, in keeping with Pagan superstitions and mythological legends, if this extraordinary man who was then before his judgment bar was in reality one of the gods in human form: hence his question, "Whence art thou?" While their words to Pilate may have produced

an effect on the governor for which they were not prepared, it is clearly seen that the Jews had again outmaneuvered him.

### "Behold, Your King!"

(John 19: 14-18)

*Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King!* It was pointed out in a previous lesson that Bible students are not agreed regarding the time when Jesus and his disciples ate the passover supper; but as stated then, the Synoptic Gospels seem to indicate that they ate at the regular time. If that is true, the statement here does not mean that it was "the Preparation for the passover," meaning the passover supper, but rather the preparation day (Friday) before the sabbath of the passover week. (See Mark 15: 42; Luke 23: 54.) The eating of the passover in John 18: 28 apparently has reference to the feast, that is, the seven days (cf. 2 Chron. 30: 22), and not the pascal supper. This interpretation, as Robertson points out, keeps John in harmony with the Synoptics.

The time reference here was according to Roman calculation. Jewish time was not in use when John wrote. The verses between this section and the previous one tell of Pilate's again being thwarted in his effort to release Jesus, and of his taking his seat again in apparent preparation for the reversal of his decision regarding Jesus. When Pilate said to the Jews, "Behold, the man!" he was trying to call forth their sympathy, by showing that he was only a humiliated and suffering man; but when he said, "Behold, your King!" he was being sarcastic, evidently because they had outsmarted him and forced him to act contrary to his best judgment. (Cf. verses 19-22.)

*They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.* While Pilate continued his sarcasm, the priestly group, who did not have the Messianic hope of the Pharisees, not only rejected Jesus, but, in effect,

God as their king. (Cf. 1 Sam. 12: 12; 8: 7.) They apparently were willing to do anything to carry their point. The success of their effort is recorded in verse 16. (Cf. Luke 23: 20-25.)

*They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto a place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.* (For a fuller account, see Luke 23: 26-43.) The three men on the crosses died a different death with reference to sin. One died in sin; one died to sin; While Jesus died for sin.

**"Behold, Thy Son!"—**

**"Behold, Thy Mother!"**

(John 19: 25-30)

These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Verses 23, 24 tell what the soldiers did. There were other women near the scene of the crucifixion (see Matt. 27: 55, 56; Mark 15: 40, 41), but the ones which John names were "standing by the cross of Jesus," three of whom are clearly identified—the mother of Jesus, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Some Bible students endeavor to make it appear that the sister of the mother of Jesus and Mary the wife of Clopas are one and the same person; but if that were true, we would have two sisters with the same name, Mary.

When we take into consideration some of the peculiarities of John in writing his record, we may have some light on this question. John never mentions his own name, nor that of the mother of Jesus; and if, as many Bible students think, the sister of the mother of Jesus was Salome, the mother of John, he would probably have the same reason for not mentioning her name. Furthermore, only John mentions the fact that the mother of Jesus was at the cross. Among those who were beholding from afar, according to Matthew and Mark, were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee. Many Bible students con-

sider the second Mary mentioned here as being the same as Mary the wife of Clopas, the latter being the same as Alphaeus of Matthew 10: 3. If this is true, then we have two of the ones mentioned by John, along with the mother of Jesus; and since Salome is also named by Matthew and Mark as being with the other two, it is reasonable to assume that she was the sister of the mother of Jesus. It is also fair to conclude that the three left their position "from afar," and accompanied the mother of Jesus to a place "by the cross."

*When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.* The disciple whom Jesus loved was evidently John, and if the relationship existed which has just been suggested, then it was but natural that Jesus would make this gesture regarding the care for his mother. If one should wonder why Jesus did not commit the care of his mother to one of his brothers, the answer is probably to be found in the fact that they were still unbelievers (cf. John 7: 5), and would not therefore have the same sympathy toward her that her nephew John would manifest. It appears from the record that John was true to his trust. (See the latter part of verse 27).

*After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.* This vinegar is not to be confused with the drugged wine which he refused before his crucifixion. (See Matt. 27: 33, 34; Mark 15: 22, 23.) The hyssop (reed, according to Matthew and Mark) was probably three or four feet long, and was used so they could reach the mouth of Jesus with the sponge full of vinegar. This appears to have been the last thing that was done for Jesus before he died. Note his last words.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and purpose.

### Introduction

What was the next step for the Jews after they had condemned Jesus?  
How does John describe this part of the drama?  
What conclusion did Pilate reach concerning Jesus?  
Why wasn't he successful in his efforts to free Jesus?  
Discuss some of the movements which were made by Pilate and the Jews.

### The Golden Text

Show why example is one of the very best ways to teach any truth.  
Why is love the underlying principle of the Christian religion?  
How only may we know the meaning of true love?  
What is the practical meaning of love in the life of Christians?  
What is the true significance of cross-bearing?

### "Behold, the Man!"

What was Pilate's purpose in saying, "Behold, the man!"?  
What was done to Jesus before this? and why?  
What was the Roman method of scourging a prisoner?  
Why did the soldiers mock Jesus as well as scourge him?  
Why didn't Pilate restrain them?  
How did the Jews react to Pilate's dramatic move to enlist their sympathy?  
Why did the governor tell them to crucify Jesus, since he judged him to be innocent of the charges against him?

What reply did they make to him? and why?  
Why hadn't they mentioned their charge of blasphemy before?  
How was Pilate affected when he heard of this phase of the question?  
Why was he the more afraid? and what was his reaction?

### "Behold, Your King!"

What is the meaning of "it was the Preparation of the Passover"?  
What is the difference between "Preparation for the passover" and "Preparation of the passover"?  
When was the "sixth" hour?  
Why did Pilate say, "Behold, your King!" instead of "Behold, the man!"  
What was the reaction of the Jews to this? and with what result?  
Where was Jesus crucified? and how did he get there?  
What was the difference in the deaths of the three men who died there?

### "Behold, Thy Son!"—"Behold, Thy Mother!"

What did the soldiers do to Jesus? and why?  
Who were the women who were standing by the cross of Jesus?  
What difference is noted between John's record and that of the Synoptics?  
Which disciple was standing by the mother of Jesus? Give reasons for your answer.  
Why did Jesus commit his mother to the care of this disciple, rather than to one of his brothers?  
What was the last act performed for Jesus before he died?  
What were his last words?

## Lesson XII—March 19, 1961

# JOHN'S RECORD OF THE RESURRECTION

### Lesson Text

#### John 20:11-20

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

12 And she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Je'-sus had lain.

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

14 When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Je'-sus standing, and knew not that it was Je'-sus.

15 Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the

gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Je'-sus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rab-bo'-ni; which is to say, Teacher.

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

18 Mary Mag-da-le'-ne cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and *that* he had said these things unto her.

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where

the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Je-sus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." (1 Cor. 15: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 1:10-18.

### Daily Bible Readings

March 13. M.....	Jesus Predicted His Resurrection (Matt. 16: 21-28)
March 14. T.....	Prophecy of the Resurrection (Psalm 16)
March 15. W.....	Announcement by Angels (Matt. 28: 1-10)
March 16. T.....	The Empty Tomb (John 20: 1-10)
March 17. F.....	Jesus and Thomas (John 20: 24-31)
March 18. S.....	Peter Preaches the Resurrection (Acts 2: 22-36)
March 19. S.....	The Risen Christ (Rev. 1: 10-18)

TIME.—A.D. 30—the glorious first day of the week: the Lord's day.

PLACES.—The tomb of Jesus and the house where the disciples were.

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

### Introduction

When Jesus died upon the cross, no group of people could have seemed more abjectly weak, more pitifully hopeless, and more absolutely doomed to scorn and extinction, than the disciples whom he had gathered around him. When he was arrested and brought to trial, the boldest of his followers vehemently denied that he even so much as knew him, and all of those who had been closest to him left him and fled for their own safety. Only John, it seems, was willing to walk, with any degree of confidence, into the palace of the high priest where the trial was being conducted, and he appears to have been the only one of the apostles who was near the cross where Jesus had been crucified.

A statement is found in the prologue to John's narrative regarding the influence which Christ has exerted upon the human race. 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." (John 1: 4, 5.) John's words were written long after the effort was made to extinguish that light by the crucifixion, but it was still shining when he penned his message. Something had happened, as Clement of Alexandria later expressed it, which "changed sunset into sunrise," and the world could never be the same again. About

thirty-five years after Jesus had been put to death, the Roman historian Tacitus, in expressing both his astonishment and indignation at the continuous progress of the Christian movement, noted that the "pestilent superstition though checked for the time being, broke out afresh, not only in Judea, where the mischief started, but also at Rome, where all manner of horrible and loathsome things pour in and become fashionable."

Thus, from the very beginning, it seemed incredible to a scholar like Tacitus that the flame kindled by Christ should go on burning. But here is the marvel of history, not that the world is dark—it always has been—but that we have a radiant spiritual heritage, coming down to us across the centuries, which all the evil of the world has never been able to destroy. The triumph of Christ will for ever guarantee the ultimate outcome of the right. We have seen enough to know that many of the best things of life get crucified and put in a tomb; but they always have their third day. There will always be darkness, crucifixion, and the tomb; but over and above them the light will continue to shine; for the darkness can never put it out.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again —

Th' eternal years of God are hers;  
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies among his worshippers.

—William Cullen Bryant.

## The Golden Text

*"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."* The resurrection of Christ is a well-attested historical fact, but it may not be as easy for us to realize it as it was for the early Christians. Some of them saw Christ die, and then saw him after he was raised up; while a host of others had the testimony of those who had been eye-witnesses. Those people did not need to be concerned so much with the historical fact of the resurrection; it was their privilege to proclaim the good news regarding it. Christianity to the apostles and their first converts was history; its central events were too near to be discredited. Christ died and rose again, and those truths were the substance of their faith and teaching. To them the power of death had been broken.

But as the years passed by people were converted to Christianity who did not share all of the convictions of the early Christians. This was especially true in Corinth. It appears that some of them were willing to admit that Jesus was raised up, but they denied that others would live again. "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?" (1 Cor. 15: 12.) But to those who knew the truth, the resurrection of Christ was meaningless, if no one else would be raised up, and so Paul continues: "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." (Verses 13, 14.)

It was after the apostle had developed his argument of a general resurrection, based on the resurrection of Jesus, that he made his ringing statement which serves as our golden text today. Read verses 15-19. Christ and the apostles frequently referred to death as a sleep (cf. John 11: 1; 1 Thess. 4: 14), and the resurrection, of course, was the awakening. And, too, the term "firstfruits" had a very definite meaning to the people who had lived under the law of Moses. The offering of the firstfruits was required before the harvest could be reaped and enjoyed. This not only signified that the harvest belonged to God, but was also a token that the rest would follow. And in like manner, the resurrection of Jesus is both proof and pledge that those who sleep in him will also be raised.

## The Text Explained

The Lord's Appearance to Mary  
(John 20: 11-16)

*But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping; so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.* We learn from Mark 16: 9 that the Lord's first appearance after his resurrection was to Mary Magdalene. "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." There were other women with Mary when she first went to the tomb early that day (Mark 16: 1), but John was concerned only with her when he wrote his record. After she saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance to the tomb, she ran and told Peter and John that "they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have

laid him." It was then that the two apostles ran to the sepulchre and discovered the empty tomb. (See John 20: 1-10; cf. Mark 16: 9-11.)

After reporting to Peter and John that which she had seen, Mary returned to the tomb, probably arriving there after the other women and the two apostles had left, so that she was alone when Jesus appeared to her. Taking into consideration Mark 16: 10 and John 20: 2, it is quite evident that Mary Magdalene left the other women at the tomb when she went to tell Peter and John, and that it was the companions of Mary who saw the angels and received their message, as set forth in Matt. 28: 1-10. The appearance of Jesus to them was after his appearance to Mary Magdalene. While at the tomb apparently alone, Mary was weeping, and when she looked into the tomb she saw the two angels.

*And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto*

them, *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* There is no indication that Peter and John saw the angels, and it is quite noticeable that Mary did not react to their appearance as the other women did. It is possible that Mary did not realize that they were angels, and for that reason did not manifest the usual fear which human beings generally demonstrated when they were in the presence of these heavenly beings. She talked with them as if they were merely attendants in the garden.

*When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.* Inasmuch as Mary was well acquainted with Jesus in the flesh, many have wondered why she did not recognize him when he thus appeared to her. The Bible does not assign any reason for this failure on her part, but, as some have suggested, it may have been due to her deep grief. Alford quotes Draseke as saying, "Her tears wove a veil, which concealed him who stood before her. The seeking after the dead prevents us from seeing the living." (Cf. Luke 24: 16.) It is quite certain that Mary did not expect to see Jesus, and being wholly occupied by her grief and other thoughts, she was not prepared for this great revelation.

*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* The first question which Jesus asked Mary was the same as that of the angels, and probably suggested sympathy; while the second question may have been intended to leave the impression that he knew the cause of her grief, and might be able to help her find the one she sought. We are not told why Mary supposed that Jesus was the gardener, but whatever the reason for her thinking so, she spoke that which was in her heart when she replied to his questions.

Some commentators have raised the question of the Lord's dress at the time he appeared to Mary, but we have no information on that subject. We gather from John 19: 23, 24; 20: 6, 7 that he was not buried in the

clothing which he was accustomed to wear in public, but we have no way of knowing where he obtained the clothes he had on at the time of this lesson. Alford speaks of the matter in these words: ". . . we must believe the clothing of his risen body to have been that *which he pleased to assume*; not earthly clothing, but perhaps some semblance of it." This, of course, may be true, but we have no way to be certain about it.

*Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni;* which is to say, *Teacher.* Only one word, and that word her name, was required to awaken in Mary the consciousness of the presence of Jesus; and she, in turn, needed only one word to express her great joy. There must have been something in the way the Lord pronounced her name that cause Mary to recognize him, just as he was made known to the two disciples in Emmaus. (See Luke 24: 35.) The Good Shepherd calleth his own sheep by name, and they recognize his voice (John 10: 3, 4). The verse now under consideration seems to indicate that Mary was not looking at Jesus when he spoke to her. The term "Rabboni" is interpreted by John for his readers out of Palestine. The word is found in the New Testament only here and in Mark 10: 51.

### **His Charge to Her**

(John 20: 17, 18)

*Jesus saith to her, Touch, me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.* This verse has caused commentators considerable difficulty in their effort to explain it. Vincent says that the verb primarily means *to fasten to*, and hence implies here, not a mere momentary touch, such as he bade Thomas make (verses 24-29), but a *clinging to*. And so, instead of remaining there with the Lord, he wanted her to carry a message from him to his disciples. This was a much greater honor than merely remaining with the Lord. And furthermore, it appears that the time for such physical relations with the Lord had passed. From then on communion with Christ would be by faith through the Spirit, inasmuch as

Jesus was ascending to the Father. This is probably the significance of the present tense, "I ascend," which implied that he had already entered upon that new stage of being which the actual ascension formally inaugurated. (Vincent, in loco. Cf. Matt. 28: 9, 10.)

In the expression "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God," Jesus was evidently making a distinction between the relation which he sustained to the Father, and theirs. God was his Father by nature, and theirs by adoption; and the same, of course, is true of us. In addition to this difference between his relation to God and that of merely human beings, McGarvey and Pendleton think that "his words are intended to show us our exaltation. We have reason to believe that next to our Lord's title as Son our title as sons of God by adoption is as high in honor as any in the universe." Barnes notes that nothing was better fitted to afford consolation to the disciples than this assurance that *his* God was *theirs*, and that, although he had been slain, they were still indissolubly united in attachment to the same Father and God.

*Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and that he had said these things unto her.* Mary told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and then gave his message to them. It is interesting to observe that the women who followed Jesus were the last at the cross; among those who beheld the tomb, and how Jesus was buried (Luke 23: 55, 56); were the first to discover that the tomb had been opened; and were the first to report the fact of the Lord's resurrection to his sorrowing disciples, and that upon his authority.

### The Appearance to the Apostles

(John 20: 19, 20)

*When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples there-*

*fore were glad, when they saw the Lord.*

It has already been pointed out in this lesson that the Lord's first appearance after his resurrection was to Mary Magdalene. His other appearances while on the earth seem to have been in the following order: (2) To the other women on their way to tell the disciples, Matt. 28: 9, 10; (3) to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Mark 16: 12, 13; Luke 24: 13-32; (4) to Simon, Luke 24: 33-35; 1 Cor. 15: 5; (5) to the ten apostles, Thomas being absent, Luke 24: 36-43; John 20: 19, 25; (6) to the eleven apostles, Mark 16: 14; John 20: 26-29; (7) to the seven disciples at the sea of Tiberias, John 21: 1-24; (8) to the eleven apostles and the five hundred brethren on a mountain in Galilee, Matt. 28: 16-20; 1 Cor. 15: 6; (9) to James the Lord's brother, 1 Cor. 15: 7; and (10) to all the apostles at the ascension, Mark 16: 19, 20; Luke 24: 44-53; Acts 1: 3-11. There were also some appearances of Jesus after the ascension, namely, (1) to Stephen, Acts 7: 54-60; (2) to Paul, 1 Cor. 15: 8; Acts 26: 11-19; and (3) to John, Rev. 1: 9-20.

As may be seen from the list of appearances just given, the appearance of the verses now under consideration was the fifth which Jesus made on the day he arose from the dead. John is very specific about the day—"on that day, the first day of the week." Looking at the word "evening" in the light of Luke 24: 29, 33, 36, it is probably fair to assume that the meeting now under consideration took place during the early part of the night, which according to Jewish time, would not be on the first day of the week. But John appears to have been using Roman time, and if so, it was still the first day of the week, and would be until midnight.

We have no means of knowing where Jesus was during the time between his several appearances to his disciples, and the question does not concern us; for it is quite evident that the period of his usual visible association with his disciples was over. He simply appeared to them at his will, and for the purposes which he had in mind.

While there is nothing definite

about the location of the place where the disciples were at the time Jesus appeared to them, it may have been the upper room mentioned in Acts 1: 13. However, we are told that they were careful not to expose themselves, because of their fear of the Jews. No reason is assigned for the absence of Thomas. David Smith suggests that it may have been that he fled the farthest in the panic occasioned by the arrest of Jesus, and had not yet returned. We are also not told who the others were "that were with them" (Luke 24: 33), but we are told that Jesus had appeared to Simon. This was the meeting the two disciples from Em-

maus entered, and gave their report about the Lord's third appearance of that day; and it was while they were speaking these things that Jesus entered the room and said, "Peace be unto you." It is easy to understand why the disciples were glad, when they saw the Lord. And for us, it is enough to know that he lives for ever!

But now thou art in the Shadowless Land,

Behind the light of the setting Sun;  
All the worst is forgotten which Evil planned,

And the best which Love's glory could win in won.

—Sir Edwin Arnold.

### Questions for Discussion

**What is the subject of this lesson?**

**Repeat the golden text.**

**Give time, place, and persons.**

#### Introduction

Tell something of the circumstance of the disciples when Jesus died.  
Discuss the influence which Jesus has had on the world of mankind.  
Why is all this true?  
What great lesson do we learn from these things?

#### The Golden Text

Describe something of the effect of the resurrection of Christ on the early disciples.  
What about it did they emphasize most?  
What change of attitude was noted among later Christians?  
In what manner does the New Testament speak of the death of God's people?  
What is the significance of the first-fruit of them that are asleep?"

#### The Lord's Appearance to Mary

Who was honored by the Lord's first appearance after his resurrection?  
Discuss the events which led up to this appearance.  
What were the circumstances surrounding this appearance?  
What was unusual about Mary's reaction in the presence of the angels?  
How do you account for her failure to recognize Jesus?  
What questions did Jesus ask her and their probable significance?

Why did she suppose him to be the gardener?  
What did Jesus say which caused Mary to recognize him?  
What was her response to Jesus?  
What is the meaning of the term "Rabboni"?

#### His Charge to Her

Why did Jesus refuse to allow Mary to touch him?  
What, instead, did he tell her to do?  
What is implied in the use of the present tense—"I ascend"?  
Why didn't Jesus simply say, "I ascend to our Father" instead of "my" "your" Father?  
What lesson did he probably mean to teach the disciples?  
What is said about the part which *women* played in this great drama of the ages?

#### The Appearance to the Apostles

What do we know regarding the various appearances of Jesus between his resurrection and ascension?  
Which one of these appearances is recorded in this section of our lesson?  
At what time did he come to the apostles? that is, at what time of day?  
Where were they? and why?  
Give the principle facts regarding this appearance.  
Which one of the apostles was not present on this occasion?  
What message did Jesus give to them when he appeared?  
How did they react to his appearance?  
What great significance does all of this have for us?"

### Lesson XIII—March 26, 1961

## JESUS APPEARS TO PETER AND OTHER DISCIPLES

### Lesson Text

#### John 21: 5-19

5 Je'-sus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore,

and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 That disciple therefore whom Je'-sus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Si'-mon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.

9 So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Je'-sus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken.

11 Si'-m6n Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

12 Je'-sus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Je'-sus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Je'-sus was manifested to the disci-

pies, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 So when they had broken their fast, Je'-sus saith to Si'-mon Peter, Si'-mon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again a second time, Si-mon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Si'-mon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Je'-sus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

19 Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14:15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 22:31-62.

### Daily Bible Readings

March 20. M.....	Faithfulness of Peter (2 Pet. 1: 12-21)
March 21. T.....	Peter a Fellow-elder (1 Pet. 5: 1-11)
March 22. W.....	Love Tested (Matt. 19: 16-22)
March 23. T.....	Jesus Requires our Highest Love (Luke 14: 25-35)
March 24. F.....	Jesus and Peter (John 21: 16-25)
March 25. S.....	Appearances of Jesus (Acts 9: 1-9; 1 Cor. 15: 8)
March 26. S.....	Love, Badge of Discipleship (John 13: 34, 35)

TIME.—A.D. 30—sometime between the resurrection and the ascension.

PLACE.—At the sea of Tiberias.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Peter, and six other disciples.

### Introduction

There is nothing pertaining to the life of Christ that is not both interesting and instructive. John tells us (20: 30, 31) why he wrote the things which are contained in the book which bears his name; and when we consider that which is said in the closing verse of that book (21: 25) we are impressed, not only with the

enormous volume of the Lord's words and deeds, but also, and chiefly, with the great importance of the things which were recorded by John.

The story of the breakfast by the sea, and the things which happened in connection with it, are among those highly important incidents which were chosen and recorded by

the apostle whom Jesus loved. So graphic is his narrative of the things under consideration at the time of this appearance that we almost feel as we read it that we are there with the Lord and the seven disciples as they experienced these things there by the sea which they knew and loved so well.

The four verses which precede the lesson text should be read in order to see the setting of the lesson which follows. "After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself on this wise. There were together Simon Peter,

and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing. But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." Although there were seven disciples in the group, it is obvious from the verses which follow that the story was selected by John primarily for that which is said about Peter.

### The Golden Text

*"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."* It should be kept in mind that Peter, during the final days of the Lord's sojourn among the people of Israel, made great professions regarding his love for and loyalty to Jesus. He declared that he was willing to die for him, and he assured him that even if all others forsook him, he would not. But when the full sequel was unfolded, no man sunk lower than Peter in his personal relations with Jesus. Even within seeing and hearing distance of his Lord, Peter cursed and swore that he did not even know Jesus or understand what the people were talking about when they said that he was one of his disciples.

It should also be remembered that Jesus, on the day he first met Peter, made a prediction regarding his future stability. When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, "Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter)." (See John 1: 42.) Jesus, of course, understood Simon. He knew what was in him at the time he met

him, and he also knew what he was capable of becoming. There was no doubt about the Lord's love for Simon, and that love would claim its own, regardless of how shameful Peter acted; but it would be necessary for their love to be mutual, and that would require that Peter demonstrate his love for Jesus. That is where the emphasis is in this lesson.

Love is one of the fundamental principles of the kingdom of Christ, and that fact cannot be emphasized too often. No one devoid of love can remain in the favor of God. A mere profession of love will not suffice: there must be a living and active demonstration of it. The passage which serves as our golden text for today is taken from the Lord's last discourse to his disciples. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. ... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." (John 14: 15, 21; cf. 1 John 3: 14-18; 4: 20, 21; 5: 3.)

### The Text Explained

#### The Miraculous Draught of Fishes

(John 21: 5-a)

*Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.* Many Bible students have wondered why these disciples of Jesus went fishing that day. It is known that at least some of them had followed that trade before they became the constant companions of

Jesus (cf. Luke 5: 1-11), and some have hastily concluded that they probably felt that their work as apostles of Christ was over, and that they would return to their old occupation. But in view of the Lord's previous appearances to them, it is more reasonable to suppose, with David Smith, Farrar, and others, that they were merely endeavoring to earn a livelihood while waiting further

developments. Jesus had sent them word that he would go before them into Galilee, *where they would see him*, and that no doubt accounted for their presence there. (See Matt. 28: 7.)

The form of address used by Jesus in speaking to his disciples is not found elsewhere in John. An entirely-different word is used from the one found in 13: 33. The term used here is a colloquial expression, such as "My boys," and was probably used often by men on the shore who wanted to buy fish or who were simply asking about the success of the fishermen. The same word is used by John in his First Epistle (2: 13, 18). The Lord's question to them was framed so as to expect a negative answer, and it may be expressed in these words: "You haven't anything to eat, have you?" Greek scholars tell us that the substantive used here by Jesus signified something to eat which was added to bread at a meal, as in this case, fish. Their answer was short and to the point, "No."

*And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.* There is no reason assigned for casting the net on the right side of the boat, but the disciples did as they were instructed, and their success was beyond their greatest expectations. This experience must have caused them to think of a similar one, when they were called to become the constant followers of Jesus. (See Luke 5: 1-11.)

*That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.* The disciples must have understood that this was a miracle, and its similarity to the one just referred to evidently caused John to take a closer look at the man on the shore. Those who are acquainted with the history of Peter and John will agree that, while Peter usually acted before John did, the latter generally understood quicker that his more impetuous fellow-apostle.

*So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but*

*about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.* The impulsive Peter who had stripped himself to his undergarment (see marginal note) acted in character. In his eagerness to reach the Lord, he cast himself into the water and either waded or swam to the shore. It was only about one hundred yards. The others, however, with more restraint, came in the boat and dragged the net which was filled with fishes.

### A Breakfast by the Sea

(John 21: 9-14)

*So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.* The fire, the bread, and the fish which the disciples saw on the shore were in all probability miraculously provided by the Lord, and were in sharp contrast with their failure to procure anything to eat during the night. It is also possible that the Lord meant to teach them a lesson regarding providential care for them in their service for him.

*Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken. Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.* At the command of Jesus, Peter went aboard (see marginal note), and drew the net to land. John's probable reason for recording the exact number of fishes was to show the magnitude of the miracle, both as to quantity of the catch and the strength of the net. (Cf. Luke 5: 6.)

*Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.* Alford thinks that this implies that they sat down to eat in silence, and he quotes Chrysostom as saying that "they no longer had their former confidence, . . . but in silence and much fear and reverence they sat down, looking on him: . . . seeing his form changed and very wonderful, they were much amazed, and wanted to ask him respecting it, but their fear, and their knowledge that it was no other than he himself, hindered them."

*Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish like-*

wise. Whether Jesus himself ate with the disciples, we are not told; but so far as the record is concerned, this was the last time they were together for a meal. The giving of bread to those with him had been a familiar scene to the disciples. (Cf. John 6: 11ff; Luke 24: 30.)

This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. This statement does not say that this was the third time that Jesus was manifested since his resurrection, but the third time that he was manifested to his disciples, that is, the disciples as a group. We have already seen that he appeared to Mary Magdalene, and to the other women as they left the tomb; and we also know that he appeared to the two disciples as they journeyed toward Emmaus, and to Simon. These four appearances took place on the resurrection day, before he appeared to the ten apostles later that evening. And then, one week later he appeared to the eleven apostles; and now, "after these things" (21: 1) he appeared to the seven at the sea of Tiberias. This was his seventh recorded appearance, but his third to the apostles as a group. Inasmuch as this was the third manifestation to the disciples as a group (cf. Matt. 26: 19, 26; 21: 1), it is certain that it occurred before the appearance mentioned in Matt. 28: 16f, which, apparently, was his eighth appearance. We are not told when he appeared to James; but since Paul places it after the appearance to the five hundred which probably took place on the mountain in Galilee (cf. Matt. 26: 32; 28: 7, 10, 16) along with the eleven apostles, it must have taken place between that appearance and the one at the ascension, hence number nine. (See 1 Cor. 15: 5-8.)

### Love Claims Its Own

(John 21: 15-19)

It matters not how sorry our actions may have been toward the Lord, he never ceases to love his people. "Jehovah appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. 31: 3.) This was spoken to Israel after all their adulterous rebellion against Jehovah which resulted in their captivity; and if God

loved them in that way, how much more them who belong to Christ! (Cf. Rom. 5: 6-8; 8: 31-39.)

Just before his betrayal, Jesus warned Peter that he and his fellow-disciples were in grave danger, but the Lord assured Simon that he had prayed for him that his faith would not fail. (See Luke 22: 31-34.) It appears that Peter did not take the Lord's message very seriously, and evidently did not feel any particular need for prayer on his behalf. But Jesus loved his mercurial, temperamental, and impulsive disciple, and knew that in time he would become as stable as the rock; and he could not therefore do less than make the effort to restore him to his rightful place.

So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again, a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he saith unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Some commentators think that the comparison which Christ had in mind had reference to Peter's love for Christ and his love for these fishes which they had just caught which, of course, involved the fishing business; but that view is hardly probable. Before the Lord's arrest and crucifixion, Peter had implied that his love for Christ was superior to that of the other disciples (cf. Mark 14: 27-31); and that, apparently, was what Jesus had in mind.

Although Simon would become "Peter" (John 1: 42), it should be observed that when the Lord addressed him on the occasion now before us, he did not call him Peter, nor even Simon Peter, but simply Simon. And when the apostle replied to Jesus, all of his boastfulness was gone. His simple reply was, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love

thee." As may be seen from the marginal reading, two different words are used for "love" in the passage now under consideration; and that must be kept in mind, if we are to get the force of the lesson.

The word for "love" which Christ used in addressing Simon in his first two questions is *agapao*, the meaning of which is, have a preference for, appreciate, a feeling which would lead one to give himself up for the good of another, whether friend or enemy. This is the stronger word for love, and it results, not from mere sentiment, but from moral choice; and it is loftier and less impulsive than the other term. The word for "love" which Peter used is *phileo*, which expresses natural affection, such as a parent feels for a child, or one close friend, for another. This word is based on emotion, and is willing to give itself up to another, while the other kind of love will give itself up for another.

In the first instance, Jesus used the stronger word, while Simon replied with the weaker one. In his second question, Jesus omitted any idea of comparing Peter's love with that of others, and simply asked if he loved him, again using the stronger word. This time Jesus seems to have implied, "Simon, do you really love me?" Simon's reply was identical with his first one, using the weaker word. But when Jesus asked him the third time regarding his love, he himself used the weaker word, the one which Simon had been using, and that was what grieved the apostle. His third reply was, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Yes, Jesus did know all things, including Simon's boastful-

ness and his three denials of him; but he also knew Peter's heart, and very likely remembered his prediction regarding him in John 1: 42.

It is a noticeable fact that each time Peter confessed his love for Jesus, the Lord told him to do something: "Feed my lambs;" "Tend my sheep;" "Feed my sheep." No one can read the New Testament without being impressed with the idea that love always is the inspiration for service. (Cf. John 14: 15, 21; 1 John 5: 3.) It is impossible therefore for one to love the Lord without serving him; and that includes service to one's fellow men. (Cf. 1 John 3: 14-18; 4: 20, 21; Rom. 13: 10.) When people begin to question that which the Lord commands, either in the matter of becoming Christians or in living the Christian life, that is a sure indication that their love for him is not what it should be.

*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this he saith unto him, Follow me.* John wrote after Peter died, and he explains in verse 19 that the Lord meant by his remarks in verse 18 that Peter would die a violent death. John confirms this, but does not give any information regarding the nature of his martyrdom. Tradition holds that he was crucified with the head downward; but this is only tradition.

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What implications do we have from John regarding the life and teaching of Jesus? Who were present at the gathering by the sea of Tiberias? What probable reason did the disciples have for going fishing? What probable reason did John have for recording this incident?

### The Golden Text

What was Peter's attitude toward Christ just before his crucifixion?

What prediction did Jesus make regarding Simon when he first met him? What caused Jesus to have such great interest in him? What place does love have in the economy of Christ?

### The Miraculous Draught of Fishes

In what sense did Jesus use the word "children" in addressing his disciples? What did he mean by "ought to eat"? What did he say when they gave him their answer? and why? What did this experience probably cause them to remember? Who was the first to recognize Jesus? and why?

What noticeable difference do you see between Peter and John?  
 What happened when Peter learned that the Lord was on the shore?

#### **A Breakfast by the Sea**

What did Jesus have waiting for the disciples? and why?  
 What probable reason did John have for recording the details of the miracle of the draught of fishes?  
 What is implied by the expression, "Come and break your fast"?  
 Why didn't the disciples ask regarding the Lord's identity?  
 This was the Lord's third appearance to whom?  
 Show how we may determine the order of all of his appearances.

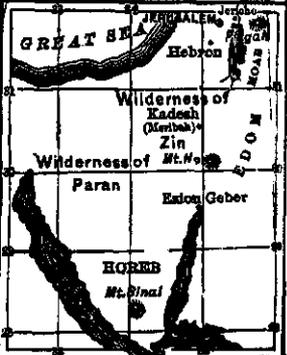
#### **Love Claims Its Own**

What is always the Lord's attitude toward his people, regardless of what they do?

Give a brief resume of Peter's general attitude before the death of Jesus.  
 What was the point in the Lord's comparison regarding Peter love?  
 How did Jesus address his erstwhile boastful apostle?  
 What must we recognize in order to get the force of Christ's words to Peter?  
 Give the meaning of the two words for "love".  
 Show how the two words were used in the first question and answer.  
 What difference did Jesus make in the second question?  
 Why was Simon grieved when the third question was addressed to him?  
 Why did he say that Jesus knew all things?  
 What did Christ say to Peter following each of his professions of love?  
 What does genuine love always imply?  
 How may one learn something of the true index of a person's heart?  
 What prediction was made regarding Peter's future? and what did it mean?



THE SMALL SPACE ABOVE (IN DOTTED LINES), AROUND JERUSALEM, REPRESENTS CANAAN IN TIME OF JOBUHA; THE LARGER SPACE ITS EXTENSION BY DAVID'S CONQUESTS.



RADIAL KEY MAP OF  
**CANAAN**  
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☞ indicates a City of Refuge.

## SECOND QUARTER

### PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

AIM.—*To consider carefully the inspired account of the era of the judges in Israel, and to note especially the outworking of divine providence in the national and personal lives of its people.*

Lesson I—April 2, 1961

### THE DEATH OF JOSHUA

#### Lesson Text

#### Judges 2:1-10

1 And the angel of Je-ho'-vah came up from Gil-gal to Bo'-chim. And he said, I made you to go up out of E'-gypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you:

2. And ye shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall break down their altars. But ye have not hearkened unto my voice: why have ye done this?

3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

4 And it came to pass, when the angel of Je-ho'-vah spake these words unto all the children of Is'-ra-el, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

5 And they called the name of that place B6'-chim: and they sacrificed there unto Je-ho'-vah.

6 Now when Josh'-u-a had sent the people away, the children of Is'-ra-el went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

7 And the people served Je-ho'-vah all the days of Josh'-u-a, and all the days of the elders that outlived Josh'-u-a, who had seen all the great work of Je-ho'-vah that he had wrought for Is'-ra-el.

8 And Josh'-u-a the son of Nun, the servant of Je-ho'-vah, died, being a hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Tim'nath-he-res, in the hill-country of E'-phra-im, on the north of the mountain of Ga'-ash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, that knew not Je-ho'-vah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Is'-ra-el.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlined Joshua, and had known all the work of Jehovah, that he had wrought for Israel."* (Josh. 24: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 1: 1-34.

#### Daily Bible Readings

March 27. M.....	Joshua's Good Choice (Josh. 1: 2-6)
March 28. T.....	The Lord Chooses Joshua (Josh. 24: 14-21)
March 29. W.....	Joshua Assembles Israel (Josh. 24: 1-13)
March 30. T.....	Renewal of the Covenant (Josh. 24: 14-25)
March 31. F.....	Blessings of Obedience (Deut. 11: 8-12)
April 1. S.....	A Blessing or Curse (Deut. 11: 26-32)
April 2. S.....	The Death of Joshua (Josh. 24: 26-29)

TIME.—1443 B.C. (Joshua's death).

PLACE.—Bochim, probably near Gilgal.

PERSONS.—The angel of Jehovah, Joshua, and the people of Israel.

#### Introduction

We gather from Paul's statement period during which the judges ruled in Acts 13: 19-21 that the general was between the death of Joshua

and the crowning of Saul as the first king of Israel. "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years; and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years."

The items which Paul recounted in the passage just quoted are based on the facts of the Old Testament record, as may be seen by reading the inspired history. But it is obvious to any one who reads the record that the Book of Judges does not cover the entire period of the rule of the judges. Two of them—Eli and Samuel—are not even mentioned in the book. Their records are found in First Samuel. The Book of Ruth also belongs to that period. "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged. . . ." (Ruth 1: la.) Taking 1 Kings 6: 1 as a basis, it is relatively easy to estimate the approximate length of the actual rule of the judges.

The passage just referred to reads as follows: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, which is

the second month, that he began to build the house of Jehovah." The time from the exodus to the entering of Canaan was forty years, and Josephus (Ant. 5: 1, 29) says that Joshua was in command of Israel for twenty-five years, making a total of sixty-five years from Egypt to the death of Joshua; and that number taken from 480 leaves 415. Saul and David each reigned forty years, and three years of Solomon's reign passed before the construction of the temple was begun. Subtracting the 83 from 415 leaves 332 years for the judges, including the time of the elders who outlived Joshua.

We are not told in the Bible who wrote the Book of Judges, but many Bible students think that Samuel did. Its main purpose seems to have been to record the history of God's people under the divinely guided rule of the judges, that is, up to and including Samson. His account ends with chapter 16. The remaining part of the book gives some striking examples of the idolatry and anarchy which were prevalent. (Cf. Judges 17: 6; 18: 1; 19: 1.) When the people reached a certain stage in their sin and rebellion, Jehovah sold them into the hands of their enemies; and then in due time he raised up a saviour or deliverer who led them to freedom again. This cycle was repeated over and over again, until they finally asked for a king.

### The Golden Text

These words are substantially repeated in the lesson text, and will be treated in their regular order.

### The Text Explained

#### The Angel of Jehovah at Bochim (Judges 2: 1-5)

And the angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim. By consulting the map, one can see that Gilgal was in the southern part of the territory allotted to Ephraim. Joshua belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. (See Num. 13: 8, 16.) Some Bible students think that the angel in question was only a human messenger who was sent by the Lord; but in the light of such passages as Ex. 23: 20 and Josh. 5:13-15, it is more reasonable to assume that he was indeed an angel sent from God. The fact that the angel came from Gilgal apparently had a peculiar significance; for it was

there, their first place of encampment in Canaan, that the people of Israel solemnly dedicated themselves to Jehovah. (See Josh. 5:1-9.) The place where the angel met the people on the occasion now before us was called "Bochim", because they wept when they heard the message. The marginal reading for Bochim is *Weepers*. (See verse 5.)

*And he said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you:* The first thing that Jehovah brought to the attention of the people through the message of the angel was that

which he had done for them in delivering them from Egypt, and bringing them into the land which he had promised to their fathers. All of this was in keeping with the covenant which he had made with them, a covenant which he said that he would never break. We should always keep the fact in mind that a covenant is broken only when some one violates the terms of it; and since God never does anything like that, it is always true that he never breaks a covenant which he makes with his people. This is just as true today as it was in the days when these words were first spoken. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 9.) Paul further assured the Corinthian Christians that it makes no difference how many promises the Lord makes, they are all sure of fulfillment, so far as he is concerned. "For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." (2 Cor. 1: 20.)

*And ye shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land: ye shall break down their altars. But ye have not hearkened unto my voice: why have ye done this?* Having reminded them of the faithfulness of God, the angel next shows them what they had done in violation of the covenant. They had ignored Jehovah's instruction to them, and had refused to listen to his voice; and the angel placed the responsibility for this sinful conduct upon them, and he sought to make them realize it by asking them why they had done it. The sinful conduct which had characterized them had caused them to forfeit any claim which they had to the blessings which had been promised them.

*Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.* It often happens that people accuse God of not doing that which he promised, but if they will only examine the facts in the case, they will soon see that the trouble is not with God, but with the people to whom the promise was made. Jehovah granted to Israel the entire land of Canaan, and promised to drive out their enemies; and that is exactly what he did as long as they continued to do as he told them.

In making the promise to drive out

their enemies, Jehovah had told the Israelites that he would do so as they were able to take possession. "I will send my terror before thee, and will discomfit all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send the hornet before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land." (Ex. 23: 27-30.)

In one of his farewell messages to Israel, Joshua said, "For Jehovah hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath stood before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand; for Jehovah your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he spake unto you. Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love Jehovah your God. Else if ye do at all go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty that Jehovah your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight; but they shall be a snare and a trap unto you, and a scourge in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which Jehovah your God hath given you." (Josh. 23:9-13.)

Thus, when one takes the time and makes the effort to consider the facts in the case, it will always be seen that Jehovah is true to every promise he makes. He knows what is best for men; and if they will follow his guidance, all things will work together for their good. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28.) But if they are determined to have their own way, they will soon discover that they must live without the blessings of God.

*And it came to pass, when the angel of Jehovah spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacri-*

ficed there unto Jehovah. In view of the fact that sacrifices were divinely permitted only where Jehovah recorded his name (cf. Ex. 20: 24; Deut. 12: 5f), and in view of the further fact that Shiloh was the place which he selected for that purpose (cf. Judges 18: 31), some Bible students are of the opinion that the place where the angel spoke to the people was Shiloh, and that the name was changed to Bochim because of the circumstance here related. This could have been true. While their action in offering sacrifice showed promise of reform, the sequel of the story seems to demonstrate clearly that their sin was too deeply rooted to be washed out with tears.

### A Period of Faithfulness (Judges 2: 6, 7)

*Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.* Inasmuch as the aim of the author of the Book of Judges apparently was to give a kind of summary of conditions from the days of Joshua to the time the angel spoke, he restated that which was said in the Book of Joshua regarding the allotment of the land to the people, that is, the various tribes, and their general reaction to the instruction of Joshua and the elders of his day.

*And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel.* This is a wonderful tribute to the loyalty of Joshua to Jehovah. We can get some idea of the manner in which he taught the people, and the support he gave his teaching by his personal example of faithfulness, from the closing chapter of the book which bears his name. "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. 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." (Josh. 24: 14, 15.)

The response of the people to Joshua's plea is found in the verses which immediately follow the passage just quoted. They pledged undivided loyalty to Jehovah, and based their determination to serve him on the facts of his goodness to them. Both Joshua and the elders who served with him were men of dedication and devotion; and it is not surprising to see the people whom they led and taught manifest a like attitude in their own lives.

This should be a great lesson to church leaders and teachers today. If they will manifest personal loyalty and devotion to the Lord, and will see to it that his word is faithfully taught, the results will be similar to those in the days of Joshua. Both teaching and example are essential, if the results are to be satisfactory. If either is omitted, neglect and disobedience are sure to follow. These matters cannot be too strongly impressed upon us today; and if we will keep in mind such passages as Rom. 15: 4 and I Cor. 10: 6, 11, it will be easy for us to see something of why we should study the Old Testament frequently.

### The Passing of an Era (Judges 2: 8-10)

*And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being a hundred and ten years old.* In appraising the stature of Joshua, someone has said that there is no character that is brought before us in the Bible in such detail, and about which there are so few blemishes recorded, as that of Joshua. He stands out from the pages of Holy Writ as the type of a great soldier, to whom great causes were committed, and by whom great things were done. His work was the conquest and distribution of the land which Jehovah had promised to his people. In performing his duties, Joshua not only manifested the valor of a warrior, but the justice, gentleness, forbearance, humility, and disinterestedness of an exemplary ruler, leading his people to victory, and giving to each his inheritance. It was his utter indifference to all selfish considerations and to human opinion, and his com-

plete and constant submission to the revealed will of God, that enabled him to accomplish with triumph his God-appointed task.

The *People's Bible Encyclopedia* notes that it is difficult to form an estimate of Joshua's character, because the man is overshadowed by the very greatness of the events in which he is placed. And yet this is not a dishonor to him, but a glory; a *lesser* man would have been seen and heard more. His life, though recorded with fullness of detail, shows no stain. By the faithful serving of his youth he was taught to command as a man; as a citizen he was patriotic in the highest degree; as a warrior, fearless and blameless; as a judge, calm and impartial. He was quite equal to every emergency under which he was to act—valiant without temerity, active without precipitation. No care, no advantage, no duty, is neglected by him. He ever looked up for and obeyed divine direction with the simplicity of a child, and wielded the great power given him with calmness, unostentation, and without swerving, to the accomplishment of a high, unselfish purpose. He earned, by manly vigor, a quiet, honored old age, and retained his faith and loyalty, exclaiming, in almost his dying breath, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Pages 601, 602.)

And *they* buried him *in the* border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. Joshua was the same age as his great ancestor Joseph, one hundred and ten

years old. Their burial places were not far apart, as may be seen by consulting the map. Joseph was buried in Manasseh, while Joshua was interred in Ephraim, some miles to the south. The passage now before us has the spelling of the place of Joshua's inheritance as Timnath-heres, while in Joshua 24:30 it is spelled Timnath-serah. Commentators and compilers of dictionaries suggest various reasons for the difference in spelling, but no one seems to know exactly why. It may have been an unintentional error, or simply a transposition of letters. No mention is made of any public mourning for Joshua, as was in the case of Moses.

And also all that generation *were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel.* The terrible sins of which these people were guilty are set forth in the following verses which constitute the basis for our next lesson. It is astonishing how people can so easily forget the Lord, but that has been true in all ages of the world. Jeremiah spoke of this condition in these words, "Hath a nation changed its gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith Jehovah. For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jer. 2:11-13.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What did Paul say about the period of the judges?  
What part of the Old Testament covers this period?  
How do we arrive at the approximate length of the time of the judges?  
What is the general purpose of the Book of Judges?

### The Angel of Jehovah at Bochim

Where were Gilgal and Bochim?  
Who was the angel in question?  
What was the significance of his coming from Gilgal?  
Why was the place called "Bochim"?  
What was the angel's message to the people?  
Of what did he remind them?

Who is always responsible for a broken covenant?  
What question did the angel ask the people? and why?  
What is always true of the promises which God makes?  
Why did Jehovah refuse to drive the remaining tribes of heathen people out of Canaan?  
What should people always do before charging God with not keeping a promise?  
On what condition did he promise to drive out the people?  
What had Joshua said about what Jehovah had done about the matter?  
How may people always be sure that things will work together for their good?  
What effect did the angel's message have on the people of Israel?  
Why didn't they make a complete change for the better?

**A Period of Faithfulness**

Why did the writer of Judges mention the things about Joshua's allotting the land to the people?  
 What was the general condition of affairs during the life-time of Joshua?  
 What do we know about the teaching which Joshua did?  
 On what basis did the people pledge their loyalty to Jehovah?  
 What is said of the elders of Joshua's day?  
 What lesson should we learn from this for our day?  
 What are some good reasons for frequent study of the Old Testament?

**The Passing of an Era**

What are some of the elements in the

character of Joshua which made him great?  
 What attitude did he manifest in doing the work which was assigned to him?  
 Why is it difficult to form a true estimate of his character?  
 Make a list of some of the more prominent traits of his character.  
 Where was he buried?  
 Why was that location selected for the place of his interment?  
 What other great man was buried in that general area?  
 What is said of the new generation which followed later?  
 What was the probable reason for contrasting the two generations?  
 How can people forget Jehovah so easily?

**Lesson II—April 9, 1961****JEHOVAH RAISES UP JUDGES****Lesson Text****Judges 2:11-23**

11 And the children of Is'-ra-el did that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'-vah, and served the Ba'-al-im;

12 And they forsook Je-ho'-vah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of E'-gypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them: and they provoked Je-ho'-vah to anger.

13 And they forsook Je-ho'-vah, and served Ba'-al and the Ash'-ta-roth.

14 And the anger of Je-ho'-vah was kindled against Is'-ra-el, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Je-ho'-vah was against them for evil, as Je-ho'-vah had spoken, and as Je-ho'-vah had sworn unto them: and they were sore distressed.

16 And Je-ho'-vah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them.

17 And yet they hearkened not unto their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them: they turned aside quickly out of the

way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of Je-ho'-vah; but they did not so.

18 And when Je-ho'-vah raised them up judges, then Je-ho'-vah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented Je-ho'-vah because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

19 But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their doings, nor from their stubborn way.

20 And the anger of Je-ho'-vah was kindled against Is'-ra-el; and he said, Because this nation have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations that J6sh'-u-a left when he died;

22 That by them I may prove Is'-ra-el, whether they will keep the way of Je-ho'-vah to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.

23 So Je-ho'-vah left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Josh'-u-a.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"After these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet."* (Acts 13: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 2: 1-10.

### Daily Bible Readings

April 3. M.....	Disobedience in Israel (Judges 2: 1-5)
April 4. T.....	Idolatry in Israel (Judges 2: 11-15)
April 5. W.....	Israel Proved (Judges 2: 16-22)
April 6. T.....	Terms on Which God Blesses Nations (Psalm 33: 12-22.)
April 7. F.....	National Wickedness Punished (Ezek. 5: 1-9)
April 8. S.....	Attitude Toward Rulers (1 Tim. 2: 1-7)
April 9. S.....	Prayer for Mercy and Peace (Psalm 85: 1-13)

TIME.—1443 B.C., and the years immediately following.

PLACE.—Canaan.

PERSONS.—Jehovah and the people of Israel.

### Introduction

The closing verse of last week's lesson forms a kind of transition between that lesson and this one. "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel." The people who lived under the influence of Joshua and the elders who were contemporary with him, and who outlived him, were faithful to Jehovah. But when they passed on, and a new generation arose, the latter, not having the godly influence of righteous leaders, gradually departed from the paths of righteousness and became steeped in the sins of the people of the land.

And if the history of the period of the judges is more or less summed up in the passage just quoted, the passage which connects the Book of Judges with that of Joshua, it is also true that a passage frequently found in Judges serves as a kind of keynote of the whole book. That statement is, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17: 6; cf. 18:1; 19:1.) Each tribe no doubt endeavored to solve its own

problems, and took whatever measures it thought best to secure and maintain an adequate territory. This course of action would naturally lead to all sorts of separate interests, with the result that regard for the general welfare of the nation as a whole was gradually forgotten.

With this kind of a situation prevailing, the people were left an easy prey to idolatrous influences; and in their weakened condition they appeared incapable of grasping the idea of a divine and invisible King. The visible gods of the land were before them, and the people of Israel fell to worshipping them; and because of these sins they were given into the hands of the nations whose gods they served. The career of conquest which had earlier characterized them was accordingly checked, and the heathen conquerors oppressed them; but they were not entirely forsaken by God. He raised up judges, also called saviours, who delivered them from their enemies, and the land had rest for a time; but sooner or later the people returned to their idolatrous ways again and were again subjected to the nation whose gods they served.

### The Golden Text

*"After these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet."* We are not to think of the "judges" as consecutive rulers in the sense that the kings were. These men, and in one case a Woman, were raised up as the need arose. They were called judges in the Old Testament sense of defenders of a cause. (Cf. Ex. 2:14.) When a national crisis arose, Jehovah often raised up leaders whose busi-

ness it was to liberate their people. As already pointed out, they were also called "saviours." (See Judges 3: 9; cf. 2: M.) It is said of Deborah that the people came to her for judgment (4:4, 5), and it appears that Samuel, the last of the judges, was the civil head of all the people of Israel.

It was pointed out in the lesson

before this one that the account of some of the judges is not found in the book we are considering at this time. We learn about Eli and Samuel in First Samuel (4:18; 7:15). In addition to their work as judges, Eli was the high priest and Samuel was a prophet. In addition to these two judges, the others who are listed were Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson.

The period of the judges has been called Israel's iron age, a cruel, barbarous and bloody epoch, made so be-

cause of the sins of the people. The nature of the office has been compared to that of the Roman dictator, with this exception, the dictator generally laid down his power when the crisis was over, whereas, the judge, at least in some instances, remained invested with his power for life. Sometimes these judges began their careers with military exploits, but not always, as may be seen in the cases of Deborah, Eli, and Samuel. The origin of their authority, in the final analysis, always rested with God. (Cf. Judges 2:16.) This is the plain affirmation of the golden text.

## The Text Explained

### The Apostasy of the People

(Judges 2:11-15)

And *the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim*; This statement was made regarding the generation which did not know Jehovah. Their deeds were evil; for instead of being devoted to God, they became the servants of the gods known as Baal. "Baalim" is the plural of Baal. There were many "Baals" among the heathen people of the period we are now considering, and various nations had their own ideas and conceptions regarding the gods they referred to as Baal. It appears that Baal was the original sun god, and was known as the principle and bearer of physical life, and of the generating, propagating power of nature. We are, accordingly, told that every cultivated district where this god was recognized had its local Baal, who fertilized the land by his springs, and to whom, as divine landlord, tribute was due.

*And they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them; and they provoked Jehovah to anger.* Frequently, throughout the history of Israel, the charge is brought against the people that they forsook the God who brought them out of Egypt. Egypt was the place where the Israelites endured the most grievous oppression and were subjected to the most degrading servitude, and from which they were wholly unable to free themselves. But

God saved them by a great deliverance; and only the most ungrateful could every forget the stupendous power, justice, and mercy which were so signally manifested on that occasion. And in forsaking Jehovah, the people turned their backs upon the real, and devoted themselves to idols which could neither see, speak, nor hear.

But are many people in this day doing any better? We have been saved from a far worse situation than that which existed in Egypt: we have been saved from sin and the power of the devil. But how often do we forsake the God of our salvation, and devote ourselves, our time, means, and efforts, to the service of that which not only does not please God, but which will certainly bring eternal death! Is there any wonder that Jehovah was, and is, provoked to anger with his faithless people?

*And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.* Just as Baal was the chief god of the Phoenicians and the Canaanites, so Ashtaroth (plural, Ashtareth) was the principal goddess of those countries. This goddess was spoken of by Jeremiah as the "queen of heaven." (See Jer. 7:18; 44:15-19; cf. 2 Kings 17:16.)

*And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn unto them:*

and they were sore distressed. This situation was directly opposed to that which existed in the days of their faithfulness, when Joshua was their leader. No man was able to stand before them then; but now they not only did not have Jehovah with them; he was against them. Joshua had warned the people that this very thing would happen to them, if they turned away from the God of their fathers.

The gods of those days have largely perished from the earth, but there are others which claim our devotion. The New Standard Dictionary defines a god as (3) "as any person or thing exalted as the chief good, or made an object of supreme devotion; anything that absorbs one's attention or aspirations; as, money is his god." Do we really serve Jehovah, or do we flirt with and honor the gods of our day? We have seen how foolish Israel was, but are we any better?

Some of the modern gods which oppose Jehovah are (1) one's own self. Selfishness is one of the greatest hindrances to Christianity, and its denial is the first condition of discipleship. (Cf. Matt. 16:24.) Do we endeavor to please the Lord first, or do we consider ourselves when we should be thinking of the Lord? (2) *Mammon* (Matt. 6:24). Do we neglect the Lord's work for the sake of money? or, having it in our possession, do we use it as the Lord would have us use it? (Cf. Luke 16:1-13.) Today a man might be so low in the social scale that we would not go near him; but if he should suddenly become wealthy, we would immediately be glad to associate with him! (See James 2:1-7.) (3) *Worldly pleasures* (Rom. 12:2). The Lord's attitude toward these matters may be seen by reading 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 1:13-15; 1 Tim. 5:6.

### **"In His Love and in His Pity He Redeemed Them"** (Judges 2:16-18)

And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them. We can learn something of the feeling which God has for his people by reading such passages as the following. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? ... my heart is turned within me, my compassions

are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man; . . ." (Hos. 11: 8, 9.) "For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not deal falsely: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." (Isa. 63:8, 9; cf. Jer. 31:3; Luke 15:11-24.) The names of the judges whom God raised up have already been listed; and the manner in which they wrought their deliverances may be read in the passages devoted to them.

And yet they hearkened not unto their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them: they turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of Jehovah; but they did not so. God's people are frequently spoken of as having been espoused to him, and when they forsook him for other gods, they were guilty of spiritual adultery. The judges were Jehovah's agents or spokesmen, and when they acted as he authorized them, they were expected to be obeyed. This principle is just as true today as it was then. Christians can be as guilty of spiritual adultery as the people of Israel were. "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. 11:2.) "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.)

And when Jehovah raised them up judges, then Jehovah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented Jehovah because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. Regardless of who may be in charge of the work here among men, Jehovah himself is always supreme; and when those who are appointed by him are faithful to their task, God is with them. This should be a matter of great encouragement to us, as well as one to re-

mind us of our great responsibility. We are not to understand that Jehovah repents in the ordinary meaning of that term; "for he is not a man, that he should repent." (See 1 Sam. 15: 29.) God simply changed his purpose toward his people, as they changed their attitude toward him. God is always merciful to those in sin, although his purpose is to destroy them if they continue in rebellion against him; but he will gladly save them if they are willing to accept his offer of mercy. No greater picture of this attitude on the part of God can be found than that of the father watching for the return of the prodigal son. (Cf. John 3:16; Rom. 5: 6-8.)

### Ungratefulness Compounded

(Judges 2: 19-23)

*But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their doings, nor from their stubborn way.* This passage, as has already been suggested, seems to indicate that the appointment of the judge was for life, or at least that seems to have been the general rule. It is a terrible thing for one, after he has had a second chance, to turn back into sin. All people who are away from God are lost, but they get their second chance when he saves them from their lost condition. But having been saved, and then turn back, people are usually worse than they were before. "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. 2:20-22.)

Their stubborn way was their hard or difficult way. It is much more difficult for a man to be lost than it is for him to be saved; or, to state the

same things in other words, one has to endure more painful suffering before reaching hell, than he does in seeking a home with God. Any unpleasantness which the Christian experiences is as nothing in comparison with the joys which he anticipates in the world to come. (Cf. Rom. 8:18; Heb. 12: 2.)

*And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel; and he said, Because this nation have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; There is no indication here as to who the prophet was that spoke these words, and since that is true, and the substance of what was said in this and the following verses is approximately that which was spoken by the angel in the preceding lesson, it is altogether possible that the historian was rehearsing that which the angel said, and stated its fulfillment in the closing verse. The anger of Jehovah is likened to a fire which burned against the sinful Israelites, they being the fuel which it was about to consume.*

*I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations that Joshua left when he died: that by them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of Jehovah to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.* It has already been pointed out why some of the people were left in the land when Joshua died (see Ex. 23: 27-33), and it is a fact that the succeeding generations did not have the personal courage, discipline, or strength of character to stand before their enemies. Whatever advantage they gained by way of making their position stronger in the land was due to the interference of God through the judges whom he raised up. This was while they were obedient; but when they began to defect to the false gods, his strong arm was no longer stretched out in their behalf, with the result that the heathen nations continued to possess the land which would have been Israel's, had they only obeyed the voice of Jehovah.

Adam Clarke notes that there appeared to be no other way to induce the rebellious Israelites to acknowledge the true God, except to allow them to fall into such straitened con-

ditions from which they could be delivered only by the providential hand of God. He further notes that these words were spoken after the manner of men; and the metaphor is taken from the case of a master or father who distrusts the fidelity or obedience of his servant or son, and places him in such circumstances that, by his good or evil conduct, he

may justify his suspicions, or give him proof of his fidelity.

So *Jehovah left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.* This, in addition to its historical fact, may, in a typical way, suggest why God does not destroy all evil before his people here upon the earth. (Cf. Heb. 2: 8.)

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

In what way is this lesson connected with the last one?  
Why did the later generation depart from the Lord?  
What is the "keynote" of the Book of Judges?  
What happened to the disorganized Israelites?  
What did Jehovah do for them?

#### The Golden Text

How did the judges compare with the kings of Israel?  
In what sense were they called "judges"?  
How many judges were there?  
How long did the judges usually rule? and why?

#### The Apostasy of the People

What is said regarding the people who did not know Jehovah?  
Who were the "Baalim"?  
Why were there many "Baal's"?  
What is the significance of "they forsook the God who brought them out of Egypt"?  
In forsaking Jehovah, what did the people do?  
How do many people today compare with the people of that day?  
Why was Jehovah provoked to anger?  
Who was the "Ashtaroth"?

How was she regarded by the people of the Old Testament period?  
Describe the condition of the rebellious Israelites.

Is it possible for people to serve other gods today? Give reasons for your answer.

What are some of the present-day gods?

#### "In His Love and in His Pity He Redeemed Them"

Tell something of the feeling which Jehovah had for his sinful people.  
After their delinquency, how did the people regard their judges?  
In what sense did they play the harlot?  
Show that the same thing is possible for people today.  
Why were the judges always responsible to Jehovah?  
In what sense did God repent?  
Why did he repent?

#### Ungratefulness Compounded

What happened after the judge died?  
What is the condition of those who disregard their second chance?  
What is the meaning of "their stubborn way"?  
What are some of the things which people must do in order to be lost?  
What is the meaning of Jehovah's anger being "kindled" against Israel?  
In what way did Jehovah prove the people? Explain fully.  
Why was this necessary?

## Lesson III—April 16, 1961

### ISRAEL TRIED BY HEATHEN NATIONS

#### Lesson Text

#### Judges 3:1-14

1 Now these are the nations which Je-ho'-vah left, to prove Is'-ra-el by them, even as many of *Is'-ra-el* as had not known all the wars of Ca'-naan;

2 Only that the generations of the children of Is'-ra-el might know, to teach them war, at the least such as beforetime knew nothing thereof:

3 *Namely*, the five lords of the Phi-lis'-tines, and all the Ca'-naan-ites, and the Si-do'-ni-ans, and the Hi'-vites that dwelt in mount Leb'-

a-non, from mount Ba'-al-her'-mon unto the entrance of Ha'-math.

4 And they were *left*, to prove Is'-ra-el by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of Je-ho'-vah, which he commanded their fathers by Mo'-ses.

5 And the children of Is'-ra-el dwelt among the Ca'-naan-ites, the Hit'-tites, and the Am'-or-ites, and the Per'-iz-zites, and the Hi'-vites, and the Jeb'-u-sites:

6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their gods.

7 And the children of Is'-ra-el did that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'-vah, and forgot Je-ho'-vah their God, and served the Ba'-al-im and the A-she'-roth.

8 Therefore the anger of Je-ho'-vah was kindled against Is'-ra-el, and he sold them into the hand of Cu'-shan-rish-a-tha'-im king of Mes-o-po-ta'-mi-a: and the children of Is'-ra-el served Cu'-shan-rish-a-tha'-im eight years.

9 And when the children of Is'-ra-el cried unto Je-ho'-vah, Je-h6'-vah raised up a saviour to the children of Is'-ra-el, who saved them, even Oth'-ni-el the son of Ke'-naz, Ca'-leb's younger brother.

10 And the Spirit of Je-ho'-vah

came upon him, and he judged Is'-ra-el; and he went out to war, and Je-ho'-vah delivered Cu'-shan-rish-a-tha'-im king of Mes-o-po-ta'-mi-a into his hand: and his hand prevailed against Cu'-shan-rish-a-tha'-im.

11 And the land had rest forty years. And Oth'-ni-el the son of Ke'-naz died.

12 And the children of Is'-ra-el again did that which was evil in the sight of Je-h6'-vah: and Je-ho'-vah strengthened Eg'-lon the king of Mo'-ab against Is'-ra-el, because they had done that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'-vah.

13 And he gathered unto him the children of Am'-mon and Am'-a-lek; and he went and smote Is'-ra-el, and they possessed the city of palm-trees.

14 And the children of Is'-ra-el served Eg'-lon the king of Mo'-ab eighteen years.

GOLDEN TEXT.— *'Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.'* (Prov. 14: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 6: 36-40.

### Daily Bible Readings

- April 10. M.....God's Leadership in a Nation (Deut. 8: 11-20)
- April 11. T.....Father's Righteous Rule (Isa. 51: 4-8)
- April 12. W.....Warnings and Admonitions (Deut. 17: 14-20)
- April 13. T.....God Keeps and Blesses (Psalm 121: 1-8)
- April 14. F.....God Saves a Nation (Psalm 114: 1-8)
- April 15. S.....A Nation's Wise Choice (Josh. 14: 14-19)
- April 16. S.....A Way of Escape (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)

TIME.—1336 B.C.

PLACE.—Canaan.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Israel, heathen nations and rulers, and Othniel.

### Introduction

The fact that God's people are *tried* in this world is neither strange nor new; that situation is the common lot of all men, both the bad and the good. Few men, if any, have been more severely tried than Abraham and Job, and the Bible declares that they were the best men of their times, in fact, of all times. These and other men like them were devoted to God, and they emerged from their trials with greater determination to serve him. Job declared, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10b.) And James pronounces a blessing upon the man who endures temptation. (See James 1:12.)

But that is not the kind of trial that we are concerned with in the lesson now before us. The children

of Israel were not tried while walking in the paths of righteousness; but the tribulations which they were forced to endure came to them as a direct result of their sins. They did not put their trust in God and rely upon him to drive the wicked nations out of their land which he had promised to them; but instead, they forsook Jehovah, and bowed down in worship before the gods of the land. They had been solemnly warned of the dire consequences of such conduct, but they were in no mood to listen to God.

But even trials because of sin can, and often do, have a wholesome effect upon those who bear them. This was especially true of the Israelites, as their later history plainly shows. From the time of the lesson now be-

fore us until the Babylonian captivity, they were guilty of idolatrous worship; but when they returned from Babylon, they never bowed before an idol again. This lesson will be of value to us if we can be made

to see that evil conduct will always bring its trials; but there is no guarantee that sinners will be blessed as a result of these sufferings. That will depend upon their attitude toward God. (Cf. Heb. 12:5-13.)

### The Golden Text

*"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."* Notwithstanding the fact that during the reign of Christ the church and the state are separated, it is true, nevertheless, that God continues to rule in both. Paul declares that "there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." (See Rom. 13:1.) Nebuchadnezzar, in relating his dream of the tree to Daniel, repeated the words of the heavenly messengers as follows: "The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men." (Dan. 4: 17.)

The passages just quoted are sufficient to show the moral responsibility of all nations, regardless of their attitude toward God. When a nation is characterized by justice, and endeavors to maintain a righteous administration, it will be raised in the estimation of both God and the right kind of people. In one of his farewell

addresses to the Israelites, Moses discussed this very principle, and showed how a nation can be raised above all other nations by righteous conduct in the sight of the Lord. (See Deut. 26:16-19.) But, as the golden text points out, sinful practices will have the opposite effect.

While these principles are certainly true, it is probably not out of place to say that in the opinion of some eminent Bible students, such as Adam Clarke, A. R. Fausset, et al, that is not the point which the writer of the text now under consideration had in mind. Clarke's words are, "The plain meaning of the original seems to be, *A national disposition to mercy* appears in the sight of God as a continual sin-offering. Not that it atones for the sin of the people; but, *as a sin-offering* is pleasing in the sight of the God of mercy, so is a merciful disposition in a nation. This view of the verse is consistent with the purest doctrines of free grace. And what is the true sense of the words, we should take at all hazards and consequences. . . ."

### The Text Explained

#### The Nations Left to Prove Israel

(Judges 3:1-6)

*Now these are the nations which Jehovah left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at least such as beforetime knew nothing thereof;* Before looking at the list of the nations who were left in Canaan, let us consider the God-given purposes of their being allowed to remain in the land. We must remember that Israel was a Theocracy, which means that Jehovah was their Governor, both in the affairs of state and religion. With Israel there was no separation of church (Acts 7: 38) and state. This explains why the people of the Lord were charged with fighting their own battles, as well as

maintaining the religious services ordained for them.

The nations who lived in the land before the coming of Israel were left there for two specific purposes, namely, (1) to be instrumental by their harassments, in promoting the moral and spiritual discipline of the Israelites (cf. Judges 2:21, 22), and (2) that the people of the Lord, and especially the younger ones, might learn the art of warfare, so that with a knowledge of the proper use of arms, they might always be able to defend themselves against their enemies. If the Israelites had been faithful to God, they would have had no need to learn warfare; for Jehovah would have driven out their foes and protected his people without the use of military powers. (Cf. Ex. 23:27-33.) But in their failure to do as the

Lord commanded them, the arms of carnal warfare became a sort of substitute for the spiritual strength which had departed from them.

One only has to read the history of Israel in order to see that it was the policy of Jehovah to use wicked nations to harass and torment his rebellious children; but it is equally plain that his will is for his people to learn war no more, when once they turn to him in trusting obedience. "And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:4; read also verses 1-3.)

*Namely, the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entrance of Hamath.* The cities of the five lords of the Philistines are listed in 1 Sam. 6:17, and are as follows: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. Their territory in the land of Canaan was the coast-land area from Sharon to the Egyptian desert. (See map.) It appears from Amos 9:7 that they came to Canaan from Caphtor, probably Crete, an island in the Mediterranean Sea. (See Deut. 2: 23; Jer. 47: 4; cf. Gen. 10:14, where the parenthetical statement may have been misplaced.) In a sense, all the nations in the land of Canaan were "Canaanites," but it appears that there was a distinct nation called by that name. The Sidonians probably lived in the northern part of Phoenicia, while the Hivites dwelt in the northern section of Palestine, in the Lebanon mountains.

*And they were left, to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah, which he commanded their fathers by Moses.* This is a restatement of one of the reasons for permitting the idolatrous nations to remain in the land which had been promised to the Israelites. If the Lord's people were faithful to him, their enemies would not be able to enslave them; but if they should prove untrue, he would abandon them to their foes.

*And the children of Israel dwelt*

*among the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their gods.* The additional tribes mentioned here were scattered in various parts of the land; and Israel's relation with them was such that it was said that the Israelites *dwelt among them*, as if the right of inheritance belonged to the idolatrous nations, and Israel was there by their permission and merely tenants according to their will. The inter-marriages were in direct violation of the law of Moses. (See Deut. 7:3, 4.)

### Israel's First Enslavement in Canaan

(Judges 3:7-11)

*And the children of Israel did that which, was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and forgot Jehovah their God, and served the Baalim and the Ashteroth.* This was a direct result of the sinful practices of the Israelites, as expressed in the closing verse of the previous section of our lesson. Matthew Henry notes that in such unequal matches there is more reason to fear that the bad will corrupt the good, than to hope that the good will reform the bad. He then compares the situation to placing two pears together, one rotten and the other sound. When people are inclined to serve other gods, they are almost certain to forget the God who redeemed them from sin. In keeping with their new relation, they are inclined to think more of the false gods, with the result that they gradually forget their own God.

Notwithstanding the plainness of the Bible teaching with reference to God's requirement that he be first in the lives of his people, it is a common practice in nearly every quarter for people to leave the uncorrupted worship of the New Testament to engage in the religious services of those who follow the principle of denominationalism. This is particularly true when people marry out of covenant relationship with the Lord. Some of them seem to think that by following that plan they can convert their partners; but it usually turns out the other way—the compromiser goes into denominationalism.

A settled conviction with reference to mixed marriages is sadly lacking among those who ought to know that which the Bible teaches on this question. Many seem to think that those who speak against such unions have no scriptural authority on which to base their teaching, but that the whole matter is left up to the individual taste; and the result is general indifference regarding this question. But, contrary to popular opinion, the Bible clearly teaches that Jehovah does have a uniform law on mixed marriages, as may be seen by reading his instruction in every age of the world. This law is not based on statutes which are arbitrarily imposed, but on the fundamental principles of the kingdom of heaven.

*Therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.* This is the beginning of the study of the individual judges. That which has gone before was more or less an introduction to the general subject of the judges. The first foreign ruler into whose hands the rebellious Israelites were placed was the king of Mesopotamia, literally the country between two rivers, that is, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. We are not told in what way the Israelites served the king of Mesopotamia, but it is possible that he overran their territory and exacted heavy tribute from them.

*And when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised up a saviour to the children of Israel, who saved them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.* A righteous God must punish sin, but he is also a God of mercy, and his ear is always open to the cry of his afflicted people; and when people are ready for salvation, he never fails to raise them up a saviour. The man whom God chose for this work was Othniel, who is first mentioned in the Bible in Josh. 15:17. When Caleb was given his inheritance in Judah, it was necessary for him to drive out the sons of Anak and others who possessed the land. "And he went up thence against the inhabitants of Debir: now the name of Debir before time was Kiriath-sepher. And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kiriath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Ach-

sah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife." (Josh. 15: 15-17; cf. Judges 1:11-13.) Othniel therefore had already manifested his valor, and was the type of man whom the Lord could use in delivering his people from bondage.

*And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he judged Israel; and he went out to war, and Jehovah delivered Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Cushan-rishathaim.* The bestowal of the Spirit of Jehovah was not limited to those who taught the word of God; it was also given to those public officials to qualify and aid them in performing deeds of valor and patriotism in the cause of Jehovah and his chosen people. Othniel was thereby fitted and qualified to judge the people and to liberate them from the oppression of heathen rulers. No details are given of the war which Othniel waged against Cushan-rishathaim; but considering the resources of so powerful a monarch, it is reasonable to assume that it was a determined struggle. But whatever the situation, Israel was victorious as a result of the Spirit of God which was given to their leader. It should be carefully observed that it was Jehovah who sold his people into the hands of the king of Mesopotamia; and it was Jehovah who delivered that king into the hands of the judge of his people.

And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died. This is another example of the faithfulness of the people as long as they had a faithful leader; but even good men must die.

### Another Rebellion and Enslavement

(Judges 3:12-14)

*And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah: and Jehovah strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah.* When the people of Israel were deprived of the moral and political influence of their God-appointed judge, Othniel, they were not long in returning to their practice of idolatry, with the result that they were again involved in national troubles. They forgot the Lord and turned to the

idols of other people, and Jehovah made the very people whose idolatrous worship they imitated the means of their punishment. It is thought by some Bible students that Eglon was the immediate successor of Balak, the king of Moab who undertook to have Balaam curse Israel. (See Num. 22ff.) But the success which Eglon had against Israel was due to the strength which Jehovah gave him. God not only abandoned his people; he also gave strength to their enemies. This was for the chastisement of Israel, and not because he favored Moab; the latter was simply the instrument by which God punished his rebellious people.

*And he gathered unto him the children of Amman and Amalek; and he went and smote Israel, and they possessed the city of palm-trees.* The Ammonites and the Amalekites, like the Moabites, were sworn enemies of Israel, and they were no doubt glad to enter into a confederacy with the king of Moab to fight against their common enemy. The fact that Eglon gathered the armies of Ammon and

Amalek does not lessen the truth that it was Jehovah who strengthened him. (Cf. Isa. 10: 5-7.) Eglon probably led his forces against the Israelites who were on the east side of the Jordan; and then crossing over the river, they occupied "the city of palm-trees" which was evidently in the vicinity of Jericho which Joshua had destroyed, but which had not been rebuilt. (See Josh. 6: 26; 1 Kings 16: 34.) Jericho was called the city of palm-trees before its destruction. (See Deut. 34: 3.) The occupation of this strategic point would not only hold Israel in check; it would also serve to preserve the lines of communication with his own country east of the Jordan. (See the map.)

*And the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.* The Lord's people have always been slow to learn that if they withhold from the Lord that which is due him, they will be forced to give it to others. (Cf. Hos. 2: 8ff.) The account of Israel's liberation from Eglon by Ehud, the second judge, is given in verses 15-30.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give, time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What does the Bible teach regarding the trial of all men?

What is the difference between the trial of the wicked and the righteous? Cite and discuss some examples.

What kind of trial is this lesson concerned with?

Why were the Israelites tried?

In what way can good come out of such trials?

### The Golden Text

What does the Bible teach regarding God's relations to civil governments?

What moral responsibility do all nations have, in the sight of God?

What is the meaning of a national disposition to mercy?

### The Nations Left to Prove Israel

For what special reasons were the wicked nations left in Canaan?

What is the meaning of a Theocracy?

Why was it necessary for the Lord's people to learn war?

What special means did Jehovah often use to punish his rebellious people?

When does he expect his people to learn war?

Where was the land of the Philistines? Name their principal cities.

What other nations were left in the land? How could they prove Israel?

What is the significance of the statement that What does the Bible teach regarding the

marriage of his people with others?

Why is so little taught on this subject today?

### Israel's First Enslavement in Canaan

In these mixed relationships, why is it easier to corrupt the good than to reform the evil?

Why is it so easy for such people to forget God?

How is the principle involved here often demonstrated in our day?

What can you say of God's law regarding mixed marriages?

Who was the first foreign ruler to enslave the Israelites?

How did he come to get them under control?

In what way was Jehovah affected by the plight of his people?

Tell of the first judge who was raised up to save his people.

What does the Bible say regarding his fitness for the task?

In what sense did the Spirit of Jehovah come upon Othniel?

In the final analysis, who was the real saviour of Israel?

What was the result of the wholesome influence of Othniel?

### Another Rebellion and Enslavement

Why did the children of Israel again forget Jehovah after their former experience?

Who was the next conqueror of the people?

Tell something of the probable plan of his attack on Israel.

When the Israelites failed to serve Jehovah, what were they forced to do?

Lesson IV—April 23, 1961

DEBORAH, A WOMAN JUDGE

Lesson Text

Judges 4:4-9, 13-16; 5: 7, 8

4 Now Deb'-o-rah, a prophetess, the wife of Lap'-pi-doth, she judged Is'-ra-el at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deb'-o-rah between Ra'-mah and Beth'-el in the hill-country of E'-phra-im; and the children of Is'-ra-el came up to her for judgment.

6 And she sent and called Ba'-rak the son of A-bim'-o-am out of Ke-desh-naph'-ta-li, and said unto him, Hath not Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Ta'-bor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naph'-ta-li and of the children of Zeb'-u-lun?

7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Ki'-shon, Sis'-e-ra, the captain of Ja'-bin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand.

8 And Ba'-rak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.

9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Je-ho'-vah will sell Sis'-e-ra into the hand of a woman. And Deb'-o-rah arose, and went with Ba'-rak to Ke'-desh.

13 And Sis'-e-ra gathered together

all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Ha-ro-sheth of the Gen'-tiles, unto the river Ki'-shon.

14 And Deb'-o-rah said unto Ba'-rak, Up; for this is the day in which Je-ho'-vah hath delivered Sis'-e-ra into thy hand; is not Je-ho'-vah gone out before thee? So Ba'-rak went down from mount Ta'-bor, and ten thousand men after him.

15 And Je-ho'-vah discomfited Sis'-e-ra, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Ba'-rak; and Sis'-e-ra alighted from his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

16 But Ba'-rak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Ha-ro-sheth of the Gen'-tiles: and all the host of Sis'-e-ra fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.

7 The rulers ceased in Is'-ra-el, they ceased,  
Until that I Deb'-o-rah arose,  
That I arose a mother in Is'-ra-el.

8 They chose new gods;  
Then was war in the gates:  
Was there a shield or spear seen  
Among forty thousand in Is'-ra-el?

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 5: 1-31.

Daily Bible Readings

- April 17. M.....A Worthy Woman (Prov. 31: 10-20)
- April 18. T.....The Mother of a Great Son (Luke 1: 8-17)
- April 19. W.....A Faithful Daughter (Ruth 2: 8-13)
- April 20. T.....A Gift of a Woman (1 Sam. 1: 21-28)
- April 21. F.....Mother of Nations (Gen. 17: 15-19)
- April 22. S.....Deborah Counsels Barak (Judges 4: 1-9)
- April 23. S.....Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel (Judges 4: 10-16)

TIME.—1285 B.C.

PLACES.—Between Ramah and Bethel, mount Tabor, and the river Kishon.

PERSONS.—Deborah, Barak, Sisera, and the two armies.

Introduction

There are people in the church to-day who do not see any need in studying the Old Testament, and especially such parts as we are consid-

ering during this quarter. But if one will only enter into the spirit of the historian who wrote these accounts, he will find that the period of the judges is one of special interest. Other portions of scripture may be more profitable for "teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness"; but for merely human interest—for the lively touches of ancient manners, for the succession of romantic incidents, for the consciousness that we are living face to face with the people of that period, and for the tragical pathos of events and characters—there is nothing like the history of the judges, found in the book we are now studying and the first part of First Samuel.

We should remember that these historical books of the Old Testament are a part of the Divine History, and it would seem, as some one has suggested, that they were left in the Sacred Collection so that we can see the various elements which had so much to do with the record of God's people, such as the human, individual and national, and even barbarian, things which we often want to ignore. But as it is, the Book of Judges calls our thoughts from the ideal which we are wont to imagine regarding those ancient days, and focuses our

attention on that which actually happened. If it was the duty of the historian, under Divine supervision, to make a faithful record of those characters and events, then it is no less our duty, as well as our privilege, to study them. (Cf. Rom. 15: 4.)

It may surprise some to learn that there was a woman judge in Israel, who apparently had the approval of Jehovah; but this is another reason why we should make a careful study of the entire Bible, and discover for ourselves just what the facts are. We are not told just why she came to be recognized as a judge, but we do have a record of what she did. No one therefore should offer any apology for Deborah's action in judging Israel and taking a leading part in the liberation of her people from their enemies. The context plainly implies that she acted under Jehovah's authority and with his approval. She endeavored to get Barak to take the lead; and even after his refusal, she never went beyond "womanly modesty" in seeking to direct the affairs which properly belonged to men. The success of her endeavors are summed up in a single sentence, following her song of victory, "And the land had rest forty years."

### The Golden Text

*"Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* This text is taken from one of the group of historical books we are now considering. The story of Esther never fails to interest those who enjoy reading the Bible. She apparently was a beautiful young woman, and it is altogether probable that she felt that that was the principal reason why she was made queen. That, however, was only the human reason, and it seemingly never occurred to her that God had a hand in the matter. Her cousin Mordecai, who from the human standpoint, was responsible for her being in the palace, had instructed her not to make known her people, namely, the Jews, but when they came face to face with a crisis, he called on her to take the matter up with the king.

But Esther demurred, and gave as her reason for her failure to act her own personal safety. It was then that Mordecai bade the messengers return answer unto Esther, "Think not

with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther saw the point; and humbling herself before God and putting her trust in him, she went in before the king, with the result that every Jew was spared and their chief enemies were destroyed.

This is a lesson which we all should learn well. How do we know but that we are charged with some great responsibility in the kingdom of Christ? It may be, as some one has so well said, that a great cause is in danger. Its advocates and its opponents are pretty evenly divided. But there is one strong man, who, if he would only speak, could turn the fortunes of the day; for men believe in

his sincerity and disinterestedness, as well as in his knowledge and insight; and the humbler supporters of the cause are waiting, in hope, to hear what he will say. He is not only qualified but is entitled to speak a great word; but he sits in silence, or

makes a speech of unworthy compromises. He simply lets the golden opportunity pass; and it may be that a great injustice is done, or the cause of truth and progress is retarded for years, all because of the want of a word he could well have spoken.

## The Text Explained

### Deborah the Judge and the Call to Arms

(Judges 4:4-9)

Now *Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time.* The name "Deborah" in the Hebrew means a *bee*. The nurse of Isaac's wife Rebekah had the same name. A prophet is one who speaks for another, and a prophet of God therefore is one who speaks for him. Such speaking might include "present truth" or making known "future events." A prophetess was a woman through whom God made known his will to the people. There are several "prophetesses" mentioned in the Bible, and of the number the most prominent ones are Miriam, Ex. 15: 20; Huldah, 2 Kings 22:14; Anna, Luke 2:36; and the four virgin daughters of Philip, Acts 21:8, 9.

Hebrew scholars tell us that Deborah's relation to Lappidoth in the original can be rendered either "the wife of Lappidoth" or "a woman of Lappidoth," but it appears to be the general view of commentators that she was the wife of a man by that name. The name means "lamps" or "torches," and there is no other mention of him in the Bible. In saying that she judged Israel at that time, the meaning is that she judged during the oppression of Jabin king of Canaan. This appears to be the first instance in which a woman was the head of a government, or who directed the civil and religious affairs of the people. It was probably due to the fact that the moral condition of the nation was such that no man was fitted or was willing to discharge the duties which were necessary in connection with judging the people.

*And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.* It is possible that Deborah had a house under a palm-tree, but in keeping with the idea of the marginal reading, *sat*, it is more

probable that she had her chair or couch from which she rendered her judgments under the palm-tree. The tree probably got its name from this association. Jamieson says that it is still common in the east to administer justice in the open air, or under the canopy of a tree. The sacred historian tells us where her judgment-seat was located — between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim. This was in the mountainous section of south Ephraim, which in New Testament times was a part of Samaria, in the central part of Palestine. Deborah did not make a circuit as Samuel did (1 Sam. 7: 15-17), but conducted her work from beneath her own palm-tree. The people came to her for the decision of disputes and the settlement of difficulties. Josephus says that the children of Israel requested her to pray to Jehovah that they might be delivered out of the hand of Jabin. (Cf. 1 Sam. 7:5-11.)

*And she sent and colled Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand.*

The language of this communique was couched in the thought-pattern of that day, and was very emphatic. We have no previous knowledge of Barak, and do not therefore know whether or not he was skilled in the art of carnal warfare; but the very fact that Deborah was instructed by Jehovah to call him is sufficient evidence that he was capable of leading such an expedition against the Canaanites. Kedesh-naphtali was apparently the home of Barak, and it was so called to distinguish it from other places named Kedesh. It was one of

the cities of refuge, as well as one of the cities which were given to the Levites. (See Josh. 20: 1-7; 21-32.)

Tabor was a mountain on the northeast corner of the plain of Esdraelon; and it was not only a convenient, but an ideal place for Barak to assemble his army, the first troops of which (ten thousand in number) came from the two tribes in the area of the danger zone. When Sisera learned of this (verses 12, 13), he drew up his forces on the river Kishon in the valley below. The army of Sisera was much larger than that of Barak, but Jehovah had promised to be with Barak and deliver the host of Jabin into his hands. God has always promised to be with his people when they carry out his commandments; and it matters not how weak they may appear to those of the world, the final victory will be theirs.

*And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.* Upon first thought, one might think that Barak was afraid to go alone; but when all the facts are considered, it will be seen that there is probably more involved in his statement than a superficial reading reveals. Jamieson notes that it was customary for Orientals to take with them into battle that which they valued highly; and when we read 1 Sam. 4: 1-9, it is not difficult to understand why they felt as they did about such matters. It would be but natural for soldiers to receive great inspiration from seeing such a person or object in their midst.

Clarke, on the other hand, quotes an addition to Barak's statement, found in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, which, if there is any basis for it, also throws light on the question now before us. After saying what our text contains, the Septuagint (the Greek Version of the Old Testament) adds, "because I know not the day in which the Lord will send his angel to give me success," by which he evidently meant that he needed Deborah the prophetess to tell him when to make the attack. If this was his reason for speaking to Deborah, as he did, it is not correct to say that he was either afraid to go into the battle alone, or lacked confidence in the promise of

God. He simply wanted to be sure that he did the right thing at the right time.

*And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.* Whatever may have been Barak's reason for wanting Deborah to go with him to the battle, there was no hesitation on her part; but there is an indication that Barak did not meet that which was expected of him. If he had done as she implied that he should, then the honor of the victory would have been his; but as it turned out, Sisera was sold into the hand of a woman. The text is not entirely clear as to whether the "woman" in question was Deborah or Jael. They both had prominent parts in the final victory, and the honor which went to either of them eclipsed that which went to Barak. (See verses 17-22.)

### A Mighty Army Routed

(Judges 4: 13-16)

*And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river Kishon.* Barak was without a single chariot, so far as the record goes. His army consisted of infantry or footmen only. "Harosheth of the Gentiles" was apparently the home of Sisera, and probably the headquarters of Jabin's army. (See verse 2.) The place was probably so named because of its mixed population. The "chariots of iron" were not only durable, but may have been equipped with metal scythes projecting from the axle on either side; and when driven into an army of infantrymen, the result would be both destruction and confusion. It is very probable that Sisera felt that with his immense host he could easily surround the mountain in which Barak's army was stationed, and force a surrender. This would account for his taking his position on the plain by the river.

*And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not Jehovah gone out before thee?* This either implies that Deborah was

giving Barak the information which he felt that only an inspired prophet could give; or that she, after his refusal to go without her, assumed the lead and gave directions for the attack. The presence of Jehovah was the source of real confidence, and the true omen of success. No army, however small, will be defeated if the Lord leads it.

*So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.* The plain of Esdraelon has been called the battlefield of Palestine, and this battle was among the greatest which were fought there. The Lord discomfited the army of Sisera by throwing it into wild confusion; men, horses, and chariots were intermingled, so that order was completely destroyed.

The wild panic which followed the battle engagement resulted from supernatural phenomena, as may be seen by reading Deborah's description of the battle. (See Judges 5: 19-22.) Josephus says that when the battle began and the two armies came close together, a tremendous rain and hail storm descended on the battlefield, accompanied by a wind which blew the rain into the faces of the Canaanites, "and so darkened their eyes, their arrows and slings were of no advantage to them, nor would the coldness of the air permit the soldiers to make use of their swords; while the storm did not so much as incommode the Israelites, because it came in their backs. They also took courage, upon the apprehension that God was assisting them, that they fell upon the very midst of their enemies, and slew a great number of them; so that some of them fell by

the Israelites, some fell by their own horses, which were put into disorder, and not a few were killed by their own chariots." (Antiquities, p. 158.) We gather from Deborah's account that the river rose to a furious flood, and engulfed many of the opposing army in its clashing torrents.

### The Calamitous Condition Which Brought on the Trouble

(Judges 5: 7-8)

The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. The reference is probably to the period between the time of the last judge and Deborah, when a general state of anarchy prevailed. Josephus says that the Israelites took no warning by their former misfortunes to amend their manners, and neither worshipping God nor submitting to his laws, were brought under the slavery of Jabin.

*They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?* These were the conditions which followed their choices of "new" gods, that is, gods which were different from those of the Moabites and others which they had served. "And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, when Ehud was dead. And Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." (Judges 4: 1-3.) These were the conditions in Israel when Deborah assumed the office of judge and counsellor, not for the gratification of her personal ambition, but for the good of the people, over whom she watched with the lively interest and solicitude of a mother over her children. (Jamieson.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

Why should people today study the Old Testament Scriptures?

What is the real relation between the Old and New Testaments?  
Why should people be surprised at learning that Israel had a woman as their judge?

### The Golden Text

Who asked the question contained in the golden text?

What was his reason for asking it?  
Why hadn't Esther thought of that before?  
What important lesson is found in this setting for all of us?

Deborah the Judge and the Call to Arms  
What is the meaning of "prophethess"?  
Give the names of other women who were also blessed in a similar way.  
At what time did Deborah judge Israel?  
Where was the seat of her sphere of activity?  
Why did she send for Barak?  
What is known of the prominence of his home town?  
Where was mount Tabor?  
How was it suited as a place for assembling an army?  
How did Barak react to Deborah's call?  
What do you think his reason was for wanting her to go with him?  
What is implied in her answer to him?  
Into whose hand did Jehovah sell Sisera?

#### A Mighty Army Routed

Where did Sisera assemble his army?  
What, then, was the relative position of the two armies?  
Give some idea of the relative strength of the opposing forces.  
What was the probable character of the chariots of Sisera's army?

What strategy did he evidently plan to employ?  
For what is the plain of Esdraelon especially noted?  
What actually happened when the battle got under way?  
In what way did Jehovah discomfit Sisera?  
How did Deborah describe the battle?  
What did Josephus say about it?  
Taking into consideration all these facts, how does the situation appear to you?

#### The Calamitous Condition Which Brought on the Trouble

When and in what sense did the rulers cease in Israel?  
How do you account for Israel's falling into trouble repeatedly?  
In what sense did they choose new gods?  
Why was war waged in the gates?  
What does the record suggest regarding Israel's military equipment?  
Who was the ruler into whose hand the people were sold this time?  
What was his attitude toward Israel?  
What did Deborah say her attitude toward her people was?  
Why were the Israelites willing to accept her as a judge?  
What does the Bible suggest regarding the success which attended her efforts?

### Lesson V—April 30, 1961

## THE CALL OF GIDEON

### Lesson Text

#### Judges 6:11-16, 33-40

11 And the angel of Je-ho'-vah came, and sat under the oak which was in Oph'-rah, that pertained unto Jo'-ash the A'-bi-ez'-rite: and his son Gid'-e-on was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Mid'-i-an-ites.

12 And the angel of Je-ho'-vah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Je-ho'-vah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.

13 And Gid'-e-on said unto him, Oh, my lord, if Je-ho'-vah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Je-ho'-vah bring us up from E'-gypt? but now Je-ho'-vah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Mid'-i-an.

14 And Je-ho'-vah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Is'-ra-el from the hand of Mid'-i-an: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Is'-ra-el? behold, my family is the poorest in Ma-nas'-seh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And Je-ho'-vah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Mid'-i-an-ites as one man.

33 Then all the Mid'-i-an-ites and the Am'-a-lek-ites and the children of the east assembled themselves together; and they passed over, and encamped in the valley of Jez'-re-el.

34 But the Spirit of Je-ho'-vah came upon Gid'-e-on; and he blew a trumpet; and A'-bi-e'-zer was gathered together after him.

35 And he sent messengers throughout all Ma-nas'-seh; and they also were gathered together after him; and he sent messengers unto Ash'-er, and unto Zeb'-u-lun, and unto Naph'-ta-li; and they came up to meet them.

36 And Gid'-e-on said unto God, If thou wilt save Is'-ra-el by my hand, as thou hast spoken,

37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor; if there be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the ground, then shall I know that thou wilt save Is'-ra-el

by my hand, as thou hast spoken.

38 And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water.

39 And Gid'e-on said unto God, Let not thine anger be kindled

against me, and I will speak but this once: let me make trial, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Blessed is *the man whom thou choosest.*" (Psalm 65: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 6: 1-10.

### Daily Bible Readings

April 24. M.....	Israel Oppressed	(Judges 6: 1-10)
April 25. T.....	The Call of Gideon	(Judges 6: 11-25)
April 26. W.....	The Faithfulness of Gideon	(Judges 6: 25-32)
April 27. T.....	Faith Tested and Strengthened	(Judges 6: 33-40)
April 28. F.....	Gideon and the Three Hundred	(Judges 7: 1-25)
April 29. S.....	Fearless Faith	(Psalm 27: 1-6)
April 30. S.....	Source of Strength	(Rom. 8: 31-39)

TIME.—1245 B.C.

PLACE.—Ophrah, in Manasseh.

PERSONS.—The angel of Jehovah, Gideon, and the opposing forces.

### Introduction

The background of our lesson for today is the same old story of Israel's rebellion against Jehovah, and the great distress which came to them as a result of their transgression. It is fair to assume from the last verse of chapter 5 and the first verse of chapter 6 that the people of Jehovah enjoyed his blessings during the forty years following their deliverance from Jabin and Sisera by Deborah and Barak. It seems that the Israelites lived in God's favor as long as they had a faithful leader; but when they were left without one, they were soon brought under the influence of the gods of the land.

When the average person today reads these historical accounts of the waywardness of the children of Israel, he thinks that they should have done better. God had manifested himself to them in so many ways, and continued to remind them of his superior power over the gods of the land; but still Israel forsook Jehovah for the idols of their day. But if we will only stop and look around, it will not take us long to see that in many instances we do not do any

better. God is just as real today as he was in the days of the judges, and his promises to bless his people are just as strong. But still we go astray, and especially when our leaders fail. Why is this true? The answer is that human nature is practically always the same, and the only way we can overcome it is to become partakers of the divine nature. (See 2 Pet. 1: 3, 4.)

The analogy which we have just been considering should cause every one who professes to follow the Lord to realize the great value of continuous Bible study, and the importance of faithful teachers of the will of God. People today, no less than the Israelites of old, are usually more constant in their service to the Lord, while under the influence of godly leaders; but let the leaders pass on or become careless, and the people will likely drift into carelessness and neglect of their duty. This should be an impressive lesson to elders especially. But their responsibility does not lessen in the least the obligation of all of us in this respect. (Cf. Heb. 10: 24, 25.)

### The Golden Text

"Blessed is the *man whom thou choosest.*" The statement which serves as our golden text for today has direct reference to those who are

chosen for the salvation of the Lord. The full statement is as follows: "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and caustest to approach

unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, thy holy temple." This has been called the last mounting to the fountain head of all benedictions, the blessing which belongs to the elect of God.

But whether of salvation or any specific work which God has for his people to do, any man is blessed who is called into such service. All through the Bible we read of men and women who were called by Jehovah to do the work which he ordained; and any one who takes the time to consider the inspired accounts of these services which were performed, understands something of what it means to be called of God in this relationship. So, instead of shirk-

ing one's duty, the follower of Christ should long for opportunities to be used of the Lord in the great scheme of human redemption.

The lesson before us today is an impressive illustration of a man who was chosen of Jehovah to do a seemingly impossible task; but one has only to read the record in order to see how well Gideon succeeded. He lived in a time and under conditions which made it appear that he and his people were hopelessly doomed to oppression; but when the angel of Jehovah revealed to him that he would have the help of God, he cast all caution aside and entered into the fray. And it was his lot to be enrolled in that great company of witnesses whose faith was demonstrated by their works. (See Heb. 11: 32ff.)

## The Text Explained

### The Call and Commission of Gideon

(Judges 6: 11-16)

*And the angel of Jehovah came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.* The location of Gideon's home was apparently in that portion of Manasseh's inheritance which was west of the Jordan. (See Josh. 17: 2.) It seems to have been some fifteen or sixteen miles north of Jericho. The father of Gideon was living there, but it was to the son, rather than to the father, that the angel appeared. Joash was a worshipper of Baal, as may be seen by reading verses 25ff.

The low depths of misery to which the people of Israel had been reduced is revealed in this section of our lesson. If Gideon was able to save a little wheat from the enemy, it was necessary that he hide in the winepress and thresh it. The lack of vintage among the Israelites had rendered their winepresses useless, so far as their normal purpose was concerned; and because of that the Midianites would not suspect that they were being used for threshing grain.

*And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.* We have no previous knowledge of Gideon, but it is suf-

ficient to know that God knew both his life and his character. When a person does his duty, however small, under difficult circumstances, God always takes note of it; and will reward him accordingly. (Cf. Prov. 22: 29; Matt. 25: 21.) This is the kind of man whom God can use in his service; and it is the kind of man whom he chooses.

*And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian.* (Read verses 1-10.) After the period of rest following the victory of Deborah and Barak, Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and he sold them into the hand of the Midianites; and they afflicted them seven years. This affliction was so severe that the children of Israel were compelled to leave their homes, and make their dens in the mountains and caves of the earth. If they sowed their land, the Midianites, along with the Amalekites, and the children of the east, came and destroyed their crops, and drove away their sheep, oxen, and asses. "And Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah.

But Gideon was like all other people in this respect: if God is with

us, then why all this evil? We seldom stop to consider the fact that such conditions are the result of sin. Hence we read, "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah because of Midian, that Jehovah sent a prophet unto the children of Israel: and he said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I am Jehovah your God; ye shall not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. But ye have not hearkened unto my voice." (Verses 7-10.)

Jehovah had promised to hear his recreant children when they repented and cried unto him (Deut. 30: 1-3), but they must be made to understand their sinful condition, and their utter helplessness apart from the Lord. Accordingly, a prophet was sent among them to show them why they were suffering such great agony. This is a lesson which we all need to learn. Faithful teachers of God's word do not delight in pointing people's sins out to them; they are simply trying to get them to see their true condition and turn away from it, so that God can bless them. (Cf. Ezek. 33: 10, 11.)

*And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee?* The angel of Jehovah did not reply to Gideon's objections, but looked upon him approvingly, and told him to go in the strength which God's presence had given him.

*And he said unto him, Oh Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* The use of the capital letter in "Lord" in this place (cf. verse 13) indicates that Gideon came to recognize the angel as the messenger of Jehovah. (Cf. Heb. 13: 2.) The magnitude of the work which he was called upon to do made Gideon feel his own weakness, but Jehovah

quickly assured him that he would be able to smite the enemy, as if they were but one man.

### The Opposing Armies Assembled

(Judges 6: 33-35)

*Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east assembled themselves together; and they passed over, and encamped in the valley of Jezreel.* The verses between this section and the one just before it should be carefully read. After confessing his weakness, Gideon asked for a sign, and the sign was granted. This does not appear to be the result of disbelief on the part of Gideon, but rather a desire to be absolutely sure that the Lord was with him at every turn. After the sign had been completed, Gideon no longer hesitated or questioned, but showed his devotion to Jehovah by building an altar unto him.

Although Gideon had the solemn promise of the help of Jehovah in his fight against the enemy, there was something else which he had to do before the battle began. God through Moses had told his people that they must not have any other gods before him, and that meant that before he would deliver Israel the idols which were present in Gideon's home would have to be destroyed. Jehovah told Gideon exactly what to do, and he proceeded that very night to obey—at night because he feared his father's household and the men of the city.

The next morning when the people of the city saw that their gods and the place of their worship had been destroyed, they wanted to kill Gideon; but his father told them to let Baal contend for himself. People have always been slow to learn that idols cannot even protect themselves, to say nothing of blessing their devotees. It was following this incident that the Midianites and their allies assembled themselves together, passed over the Jordan, and encamped in the valley of Jezreel, also known as the plain of Esdraelon.

*But the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; and they also were gathered together after him: and he sent messengers unto*

*Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.* The "Spirit of Jehovah," as used here, meant the power by which God performed his works. Later on in the New Testament the Spirit of God, along with his Word, was personified, and came to be known as the "Holy Spirit," an expression never used in the Old Testament with a capital "H." (Cf. Psalm 51: 11; Isa. 63: 10, 11.) The Spirit in these passages was called "holy," because it was the Spirit of Jehovah, who was himself *holy*.

It should be observed that Gideon first called the people of his own family, then his own tribe, and finally others in the exposed area. Matthew Henry suggests that Gideon put life into his neighbors with his trumpet. When once the work was started, following the destruction of the idolatrous worship, it appears that Gideon experienced no difficulty in getting enough volunteers to meet his needs. In fact, it was necessary for him to make a great reduction in his forces, as we shall see in our next lesson.

#### **Further Encouragement by Another Sign**

(Judges 6: 36-40)

*And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor; if there be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the ground, then I shall know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken.* We may think it weakness on the part of Gideon to ask for a second sign, after receiving the assurance from God upon the occasion of his first sign. But we must remember that Gideon is just out of the midst of idolatrous worship. All of the great responsibility which was before him was new to him, and it was necessary for him to strengthen his own inward faith for victory. He therefore again ventures to ask Jehovah for proofs that he will indeed be with him.

There is a great difference in a humble believer's seeking more information regarding a given situation, and one who questions that which God proposes to do. The truthfulness of this statement can easily be verified by reading the first chapter

of Luke. Both Zacharias and Mary asked how the things which were told them could come to pass, but Zacharias was stricken dumb, while the angel carefully explained the matter to Mary. Zacharias was specifically charged with not believing that which the angel said (see verse 20), while Mary gave every indication of simply asking for information. "And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." (Luke 1: 38.)

These facts teach us that God is not against our trying to increase our faith; and he has always been willing to help his people do that. In fact, Jehovah has often tried his own people for that very purpose. (Cf. Gen. 22: 1ff.) Peter says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1: 6, 7.)

*And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water.* While Gideon had asked for proof that Jehovah would indeed be with him in giving deliverance to Israel, there is every reason to believe that he expected the proof to be given him. We can almost see him going out, early in the morning, to the place where he had left the fleece in full anticipation that his request had been granted; and so it was.

*And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be kindled against me, and I will speak but this once: let me make trial, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.* It is plain to see that in each of these two instances a miracle was wrought. Jehovah simply allowed Gideon to name the conditions, and he worked accordingly.

Gideon's anxiety was now fully removed, and he was thoroughly convinced that Jehovah had chosen him

for the great work of liberating his people from the yoke of Midianite bondage. Gideon had already said that he belonged to the poorest family in Manasseh, and was the least in his father's house; and it was, of course, natural from his point of view, to wonder why Jehovah would choose such an insignificant person for so great a task. So, instead of distrusting God, Gideon was

distrusting himself. He was completely abandoning anything that he himself might do, and was endeavoring to make sure that whatever was accomplished would come from God. And when once he was sure that Jehovah was with him, he never asked for another sign. He could truly say, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he will do that which he promised."

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Why was it again necessary that Israel be delivered from bondage?  
Why was it so easy for the people to fall into sin?  
In what respect are we like them?  
In what way only can human nature be overcome?  
What effect should a lesson like this have upon the leaders of the church?  
What obligation rests upon every member of the church?

#### The Golden Text

Give the setting of this text.  
Why is the man whom God chooses blessed?  
What effect should this truth have upon us?  
Show in what way Gideon illustrates this lesson.

The Call and Commission of Gideon

Under what circumstances did the angel of Jehovah appear to Gideon?  
Where was the home of Gideon?  
Tell something of his family relation.  
What shows the great misery which they were enduring?  
In what way did the angel of Jehovah greet Gideon?  
What question did Gideon ask the angel? and why?  
What lesson should we learn from this regarding evil?  
What did Jehovah do when the people cried unto him?  
Why send a prophet among them?  
What should be our attitude when our sins are pointed out to us?

When do we have a right to expect God to bless us?  
Instead of answering Gideon's question, what did Jehovah say to him?  
What was Gideon's reaction to the Lord's commission to him?  
What lesson had Gideon evidently learned at this time?  
When he realized his own weakness, what assurance did he receive?

#### The Opposing Armies Assembled

Who were the enemies of God's people at this time?  
Where did they assemble themselves?  
Why did they want to attack Israel at this time?  
What did Jehovah require Gideon to do before he delivered the people from their oppressors?  
Under what circumstances did he go about this assignment?  
What was the effect on the people of the town?  
What reply did Gideon's father make?  
What is meant by the "Spirit of Jehovah"?  
How did Gideon go about assembling his army?  
Where did his troops come from?

#### Further Encouragement by Another Sign

Why did Gideon ask for a second sign?  
Discuss fully.  
Why is God pleased with some who ask regarding his plans, and displeased with others?  
What is his attitude toward those who try to increase their faith?  
What was Gideon's proposal on this occasion?  
What was the result of the test?  
What effect did this have on Gideon?

Lesson VI—May 7, 1961

## GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED

### Lesson Text

#### Judges 7:4-7, 15-21

4 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Gid'-e-on, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of

whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water; and Je-ho'-vah said unto Gid'-e-on, Every one that lapeth of the water with his tongue, as

a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And Je-h6'-vah said unto Gld'-£-on, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Mid'-i-an-ites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place.

15 And it was so, when Gid'-e-on heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped; and he returned into the camp of Is'-ra-el, and said, Arise; for Je-ho'-vah hath delivered into your hand the host of Mid'-i-an.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers.

17 And he said unto them, Look

on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.

18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Je-ho'-vah and for Sld'-6-on.

19 So Gid'-6-on, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of J£-ho'-vah and of Gid'-e-on.

21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put them to flight.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." (Zech. 4: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 33: 1-12.

### Daily Bible Readings

- May 1. M.....A Faithful Leader (Judges 6: 25-32)
- May 2. T.....Faithful Followers (Judges 7: 4-8)
- May 3. W.....Victory Through Faith in God (Judges 7: 15-23)
- May 4. T.....God Our Helper (1 Sam. 14: 6-15)
- May 5. F.....By God's Help (1 Sam. 17: 41-49)
- May 6. S.....Reward of Obedience (Deut. 11: 8-12)
- May 7. S.....Choosing the Right Way (1 Kings 3: 4-14)

TIME.—1245 B.C.

PLACE.—The plain of Jezreel, in southern Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Gideon, his army, and the Midianites.

### Introduction

Those who read and study the Book of Judges are impressed with the manner in which Jehovah dealt his people, and especially the way in which he delivered them from their enemies. Sometimes this was accomplished by one man, by a relatively few soldiers, or by a fairly good size army; but never with a force which equalled the strength of the enemy. The deliverance of the people from them who oppressed them was not always the end in view; they were taught to put their trust in their Deliverer.

We saw in our lesson last week

how the faith of Gideon was developed—until it reached the point where he was willing to put his trust in God completely; and after that he had no further trouble. But the people, too, must learn the lesson of trust in Jehovah. However, it is clearly set forth in the historical record that they were much slower in learning than were the individual leaders. In fact, it was not until after the Babylonian captivity that Israel turned their backs upon idolatry completely.

It is difficult to understand how the people of Israel could see a victory

like the one before us today, and then ever turn away from God who saved them; but that is exactly what they did. "And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and played the harlot after the Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the chil-

dren of Israel remembered not Jehovah their God, who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies on every side; neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel." (Judges 8: 33-35.)

### The Golden Text

*"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts."* This statement was made in explanation of the vision of a candlestick and two olive-trees which came to Zechariah, and which contained a message for Zerubbabel. This was the Zerubbabel who rebuilt the temple after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile. When they reached Jerusalem they began their work immediately, and soon the foundation was laid with great rejoicing, in anticipation of a speedy completion of the entire superstructure.

But this joyful anticipation did not continue long; for when Zerubbabel and his helpers saw the magnitude of the task before them, the smallness of their resources, and the greatness of the number which opposed them, they became discouraged and ceased from their labors for a period of about sixteen years. It was at the expiration of that time that the Lord's message through Zechariah came to Zerub-

babel. "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it." (Zech. 4: 6, 7.)

No opposition, however great, which stands before the people of the Lord who are charged with a specific duty can stop their advance, so long as it is his will for them to move forward. This was true during the time of miracles (cf. the Red Sea, the Jordan, before the marching Israelites, and the mountain's becoming a plain before Zerubbabel), and it is still true today. This is exactly what happened in the case of Gideon and the three hundred; and any one today who has faith in the leadership of the Lord can have the satisfaction of knowing that he, too, can be successful.

### The Text Explained

#### The Reduction of Gideon's Army

(Judges 7: 4-7)

*And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.* Thirty-two thousand men responded to Gideon's call for troops to meet the Midianites, but Jehovah told him that the number was too many. "And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let

him return and depart from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand." (Verses 2, 3.)

This gives us some idea of the low state of the moral and spiritual stamina which characterized the Israelites at that time. If Jehovah had given people with that kind of attitude the victory by a sizable number of soldiers, they would not have hesitated to claim the deliverance as the result of their own strength. But this was to be the Lord's battle, and he, accordingly, selected the size of the army for his servant Gideon. This may have tried the faith of Gideon, when he beheld the hosts of Midian (cf. 7: 12; 8: 10); but if it did, he made no complaint, so far as the record goes.

Even ten thousand men were too

many, and it was necessary therefore that the number be greatly reduced. The reduction, however, had to be according to the Lord's method. He can discern character when men cannot. Spiritual traits and tendencies which are hidden from us are clearly seen by him. This should be a valuable lesson to us. Wells notes that the choice of companions and friends is one of the most important any one can make in life, and many of us make it without consulting God. Often we select our comrades and life's partners on grounds which are the least sufficient and wise; and it is no wonder that our lives are weakened rather than strengthened by such friendships. A few with God's blessings will be much better than many who have no regard for him.

*So he brought down the people unto the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.* The "water" was apparently the "spring of Harod," which was so named because of the incident of this lesson. (See verse 1, and marginal reading.) The people whom Gideon brought down to the water were the ten thousand who remained with him after the twenty-two thousand who were afraid went home. It appears that those who lapped water like a dog simply took the water in one hand, and lapped it up with the tongue. The others bowed down on their knees and drank directly from the stream. George Adam Smith, in his *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, gives some idea of why this test was imposed upon the ten thousand men in question. His words are:

"The stream, which makes it possible for the occupiers of the hill to hold also the well against an enemy on the plain, forbids them to be careless in their use of the water; for they drink in the face of that enemy, and the reeds and shrubs which mark its course afford ample cover for hostile ambushes. Those Israelites, therefore, who bowed themselves down on their knees, drinking headlong, did not appreciate their position or the foe; whereas those who merely crouched, lapping up the water with one hand, while they held their

weapons in the other and kept their faces to the enemy, were aware of their danger, and had their hearts ready against all surprise. The test in fact was a test of attitude, which, after all, both in physical and moral warfare, has proved of greater value than strength or skill—attitude towards the foe and appreciation of his presence." (Page 397.)

*And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.* This is a further indication of the moral and spiritual condition of the people of Israel, even among those who were apparently not afraid. The absence of physical fear does not always mean that a person is the kind who meets with the Lord's approval. And, as is usually the case, those who please him are in the minority. But there are many who are afraid to be with the minority; but if the minority is doing God's will, there is no need for one to be afraid. Peloubet asks, Do we belong to "all the rest"? Are we with the big majority who lead easy lives, never raising their hands to lift the world's heavy burdens, their souls never heavy with the sorrows of others? No one is compelled to be in either group, but he has the power to make his own choice. So, what shall it be? Are we striving to do God's will, or simply satisfying our own desires while totally unaware of the dangers about us?

*And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place.* This would demonstrate that the real victor was Jehovah, and that their salvation depended entirely upon him. Jonathan, the son of Saul, once said to his armor-bearer, "There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." (See 1 Sam. 14: 6.) He can, of course, accomplish his purpose without human aid at all, if it is his will; or with one man, as in the case of Samson, or with many. Even in the case of human leadership, it frequently happens that more depends upon the general than upon the size of the army. Napoleon said, "There is a moment in every great war when the bravest troops feel

inclined to run; it is the want of confidence in their own courage. The supreme art of generalship is to know just when that moment will come and to provide for it. At Areola, I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I anticipated the moment of fright and flight, and I had twenty-five men ready of cool nerve and decision, and just at the appropriate moment I turned the twenty-five into the host, and the battle was won."

### Unusual Encouragement and the Plan of Attack

(Judges 7: 15-18)

*And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped; and he returned into the camp of Israel, and said, Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.* After the test at the water had been made, the sacred historian says, "So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent all the men of Israel every man unto his tent, but retained the three hundred men: and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley." (Verse 8.) Gideon, of course, could not see how his three hundred men could successively overcome the numberless host of the enemy, but he believed that Jehovah would somehow give him the victory. And so Jehovah, knowing just how to encourage him, commanded him to take his servant and go by night to the camp of the enemy, and listen to what would be said. He heard one of the men telling a dream, and then listened while a fellow soldier gave its interpretation, both of which may have been inspired by Jehovah. His first reaction was to worship, and he then returned to his own company and assured them that the victory was theirs. It is well to note the present "hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." This, however, does not mean that they would not have to fulfill the conditions imposed upon them. (Read verses 9-14.)

*And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the uttermost part of the camp, it*

*shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon.*

By dividing the men into three companies, Gideon would lead the Midianites to think that they were surrounded by a large army, while the empty pitchers would conceal the torches. It appears that the trumpets, pitchers, and torches made up the entire equipment of the three hundred men with Gideon. They may have had swords at their sides, but they were not used in this attack. The only sword which they wielded at this point was "the sword of Jehovah and of Gideon."

Every leader of men knows the value of well chosen slogans. The Spartans were wont to say, "Return either with your shield or upon it!" The Crusaders, "Remember the Holy City!" Nelson, "Victory or Westminster Abbey!" And during World War I, "They shall not pass!" Some one has observed that none of these watchwords ever meant more than the oldest battlecry of which we know, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon!" When we think of the omnipotence of Jehovah, we may wonder why the name of Gideon should be added to that of Jehovah. The answer seems to lie in the fact that great and abstract ideas do not have their full influence over the mind of men until they are embodied in some concrete form. This is one of the reasons for the Incarnation of God in man—the man Christ Jesus. But in the case now before us, it was true that both the arm of Jehovah and of Gideon were over the Midianites; and we have suggested to us therefore the union of the divine and the human in the work which is done in the world.

### The Enemy Confused and Routed

(Judges 7: 19-21)

*So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch; and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake*

*the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon.* The secret of success in any campaign against evil is cooperation. That was true in the case of Gideon and the three hundred, and it is true now. This is a lesson which the church needs to have impressed upon it. The middle watch was the middle part of the night, and the beginning of it may have been near midnight. The "newly set watch" suggests more or less confusion, due to the fact that the soldiers who had just come on duty had not settled down to keeping strict guard.

This battle was not fought and won by magic, but, as already indicated, by the intelligent cooperation of human and divine forces, resulting in the triumph of right over wrong. Gideon did not attack the bodies of the great army before him, but rather their minds. After carefully investigating the state of their thinking, at the direction of Jehovah, he himself thought and acted quickly, closely, and decisively. Some wise

observer has noted that our belief in God's support too often causes us to forget that he makes a demand on our ingenuity. We, too, in the service of Jehovah, are required to exercise foresight, formulate plans, and execute them with the utmost of our skill, in the spiritual warfare. Only rarely are we to stand still and see him work for us. There is, by his choice, in our religious work the interaction of the Divine and the human; but it is tragically true that we are usually illbalanced—either failing to believe or forgetting to plan, rarely doing both.

*And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put them to flight.* The mighty armies of the Midianites were thrown into utter confusion; and thinking that they were in the hands of their enemies, they began to fight each other. Those who survived started toward the fords of the Jordan. But Gideon called on the men of Ephraim to block their escape, which they did. The victory was complete. (Cf. Isa. 10: 26 and read all of Judges 8.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What particular idea impresses those who read the Book of Judges?  
What end did the Lord have in mind in the deliverance he wrought?  
Why is it that people are so slow to learn to put their trust in God?  
How do you account for the people's forgetting him so easily?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?  
Discuss its full context.  
What great lesson does it have for us?

### The Seduction of Gideon's Army

How many people responded to Gideon's call for troops?  
Why did Jehovah tell him that that number was too many?  
What was the first test for reducing the army?  
What indication does this give regarding the condition of Israel?  
Why didn't Jehovah leave the matter of reducing the army to Gideon?  
What was the next step in deciding who should go with Gideon?  
What was Jehovah's probable reason for making this test?  
What was the real value of this test?  
What was the result and its indication?

Why are people so often unwilling to be with the minority?  
What are some of the questions we should ask ourselves when making choices in life?  
What would the victory by three hundred demonstrate?  
What is the supreme art of generalship?

### Unusual Encouragement and the Plan of Attack

In what way was Gideon encouraged? and why that plan?  
In what sense had Jehovah given the Midianites into their hand?  
What was Gideon's plan of attack?  
What was the purpose of dividing his men into three groups?  
Discuss the appropriateness of their equipment.  
What is the value of a well worded slogan?  
Why say, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon"?  
What lesson do we learn from this?

### The Enemy Confused and Routed

When did Gideon and his men begin their assault?  
Why wait until they had "newly set the watch"?  
What is the secret of a successful campaign against evil?  
Why is this lesson important for the church?  
Against what did Gideon make his attack?

What does the Lord expect of us in our fight against sin?  
 In what respect are we frequently ill-balanced?  
 What should we do in order to improve this condition?

Describe the attack which was made on the Midianites.  
 Why were they thrown into confusion, and what did they attempt to do?  
 Why fight each other?  
 What steps did Gideon take to block their escape?

Lesson VII—May 14, 1961

JEPHTHAH'S VOW

Lesson Text

Judges 11:29-40

29 Then the Spirit of Je-ho'-vah came upon Jeph'-thah, and he passed over Gil'-e-ad and Ma-nas'-seh, and passed over Miz'-peh of Gil'-e-ad, and from Miz'-peh of Gil'-e-ad he passed over unto the children of Am'-mon.

30 And Jeph'-thah vowed a vow unto Je-ho'-vah, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Am'-mon into my hand,

31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Am'-mon, it shall be Je-ho'-vah's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.

32 So Jeph'-thah passed over unto the children of Am'-mon to fight against them; and Je-ho'-vah delivered them into his hand.

33 And he smote them from Ar'-6-6r until thou come to Min'-nith, even twenty cities, and unto A'-bel-che-ra'-mim, with a very great slaughter. So the children of Am'-mon were subdued before the children of Is'-ra-el.

34 And Jeph'-thah came to Miz'-pah unto his house; and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto Je-ho'-vah, and I cannot go back.

36 And she said unto him, My father, thou hast opened thy mouth unto Je-ho'-vah; do unto me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as Je-ho'-vah hath taken vengeance for thee on thine enemies, even on the children of Am'-mon.

37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: Let me alone two months, that I may depart and go down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my companions.

38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.

39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew not man. And it was a custom in Is'-ra-el,

40 That the daughters of Is'-ra-el went yearly to celebrate the daughter of Jeph'-thah the Gil'-e-ad-ite four days in a year.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back." (Judges 11: 35.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 11: 1-28.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 8. M.....Jephthah, of Great Courage (Judges 11: 1-3)
- May 9. T.....Messenger Sent to Jephthah (Judges 11: 4-11)
- May 10. W.....Message to Ammon by Jephthah (Judges 11: 12-17)
- May 11. T.....Jephthah's Vow (Judges 11: 29-31)
- May 12. F.....Success of Jephthah's Effort (Judges 11: 32, 33)
- May 13. S.....Jephthah's Daughter Meets Him (Judges 11: 34-38)
- May 14. S.....The Result (Judges 11: 39, 40)

TIME.—1143 B.C.

PLACES.—Mizpah and the country east of the Jordan.

PERSONS.—Jephthah, his daughter, and others.

### Introduction

It will be to the advantage of those using this commentary to read the historical narrative which lies between this lesson and the last one. Following the death of Gideon, the Israelites, as usual, fell into sin and out of the favor of Jehovah. Gideon had "many wives" who bore him seventy sons. He also had a concubine who became the mother of Gideon's son, whose name was Abimelech. This latter son conspired against his brethren, and with the help of some "vain and light fellows" whom he hired, he slew all of his brothers except the youngest, who hid himself.

Although a very wicked man, "Abimelech was prince over Israel three years," and is reckoned as the next judge after his father Gideon. His turbulent and bloody career came to a dramatic end when he, after taking the city of Thebez, went up to the tower where all the men and women had gone for safety. After shutting themselves in the tower, they went up to the roof; and when Abimelech came near the tower to burn it down with fire, as he had done in the case of the tower of Shechem, "a certain woman cast an upper millstone upon Abimelech's head, and brake his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man his armor-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and kill me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died." (Cf. 2 Sam. 11: 21.) But the sin of Abimelech did not go unpunished; for "thus God requited the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren."

After Abimelech, Tola judged Israel twenty-three years, and he was followed by Jair who judged the people for twenty-two years. "And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah," and went after the gods of the peoples about them. Jehovah was angry with them and they were delivered into the hands of the Philis-

times and the Ammonites, who oppressed them eighteen years. When the people finally cried unto Jehovah, he said, "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress." But when the Israelites confessed their sins and put away their foreign gods, and served Jehovah; "his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

On one occasion when the forces of Ammon and Israel drew themselves up for battle, Ammon in Gilead and Israel in Mizpah, the leaders of Gilead began to look for a man who would begin the fight for Israel against the children of Ammon; and they agreed that his reward would be "head over all the inhabitants of Gilead." It appears that their unanimous choice was one of their former citizens who had been driven away from home by his half brothers, because he was "the son of another woman," or, in other words, a harlot. After being forced to leave Gilead, Jephthah "dwelt in the land of Tob; and there were gathered vain fellows to Jephthah, and they went out with him." The life which Jephthah lived in Tob may be described as a kind of border-chieftain, during which time he evidently became expert in the tactics of warfare, and in the art of leading and governing men.

And so, when the Ammonites were preparing for battle, the Israelites, in a move to strengthen their hand, "went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob." After a clear understanding with them regarding the question of leadership, he agreed to return and become chief over them. It seems quite clear, from the carefully worded communiques which Jephthah sent to the king of the children of Ammon, that he wanted to avoid war if at all possible; but in this he was not successful; for "the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent unto him."

### The Golden Text

This part of the lesson, being in the regular text, will be considered in its proper place.

## The Text Explained

### Jephthah's Vow and Victory

(Judges 11: 29-33)

*Then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon.* The Spirit of the Lord, added to his natural and acquired abilities, fully qualified Jephthah for the work which he was called upon to do. The bestowal of the Spirit was not only a pledge to Jephthah, but also convincing evidence to his countrymen, that Jehovah was with them in their fight against their enemies. His passing over the places affected was probably for the purpose of gathering troops for the conflict, and exciting by his presence wide-spread interest in the national cause. All of this took place on the eastern side of the Jordan, as may be seen by consulting the map. Gilead was that section of the country east of the Jordan which was given to the tribe of Gad. It was one of the most desirable in all Palestine. (Cf. Jer. 8: 22; 46: 11.)

*And Jephthah vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall be Jehovah's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.* The name of Jephthah is listed among the heroes of faith (Heb. 11: 32), and that, together with the context now before us, indicates that he was deeply religious; and he evidently recognized that Jehovah was leading him. Jephthah was at first called by the elders of his people; but Jehovah ratified the choice by giving to him his Spirit.

The last word regarding the vow which Jephthah made on the eve of the battle with the Ammonites will probably never be spoken or written while men continue to study the Bible. Many expositors regard the text as being accurate in every detail, and that Jephthah did exactly that which the words affirm of him; but they regard his vow as being both rash and foolish. Jamieson notes that vows were in common

practice among the Israelites, and that they were encouraged by Divine approval, as emanating from a spirit of piety and gratitude, and rules were laid down in the law for regulating their performance. He then adds, "But it is difficult to bring Jephthah's vow within the legitimate range" (see on Lev. 27: 28).

Adam Clarke, in making a critical analysis of the question, gives the original words of the text, and says that their translation, according to the most accurate Hebrew scholars, is this: "*I will consecrate it to the Lord, or I will offer it for a burnt-offering; that is, 'If it be a thing fit for a burnt-offering, it shall be made one; if fit for the service of God, it shall be consecrated to him.'*" That conditions of this kind must have been implied in the vow, is evident enough; to have been made without them, it must have been the vow of a *heathen*, or a madman. If a dog had met him, this could not have been made a *burnt-offering*; and if his neighbour or friend's *wife, son, or daughter*, etc., had been returning from a visit to his family, his vow gave him no right over them. Besides, *human sacrifices* were ever an abomination to the Lord; and this was one of the grand reasons why God drove out the Canaanites, etc., because they offered their sons and daughters to Molech in the fire, i. e., made burnt-offerings of them, as is generally supposed. That Jephthah was a deeply pious man, appears in the whole of his conduct; and that he was well acquainted with the *law of Moses*, which prohibited all such sacrifices, and stated *what* was to be offered in sacrifice, is evident enough from his expostulation with the King of the people of Ammon, verses 14-27. Therefore it must be granted that he never made that rash vow which several suppose he did; nor was he capable, if he had, of executing it in the most shocking manner which some Christian writers ('tell it not in Gath') have contended for. He could not commit a crime which himself had just now been an executor of God's justice to punish in others."

*So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and Jehovah delivered them*

into his hand. And he smote them from Aroer until thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto Abelcheramim, with a very great slaughter. So the children of Amman were subdued before the children of Israel. The Ammonites, as all Bible students know, were the descendants of Lot by his younger daughter. (See Gen. 19: 30-38.) In spite of their close relationship to Israel, the children of Ammon were inveterate enemies of God's people and a great force for spiritual corruption. They not only rejoiced in the misfortunes which overtook the pious of Israel, but delighted in spreading the abominations of their gods Milcom and Molech, especially through intermarriage, something which corrupted the faith even of Solomon. (See 1 Kings 11: 5-7.) The three cities mentioned in the victory over the Ammonites may have formed a kind of boundary of the territory containing the twenty-cities, Aroer on the south, Minnith on the north, and Abelcheramim on the east. The river Jordan was the western boundary.

### From Victory to Irrepressible Grief

(Judges 11: 34-36)

*And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house; and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter.* It appears to have been the custom at the time for the women who remained at home to greet the victors with joyous acclaim when they returned. (Cf. 1 Sam. 18: 6.) It was, of course, only natural that Jephthah's daughter should take the lead in welcoming her father home.

*And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back.* Whatever may have been involved in Jephthah's vow, it is evident from this that he did not expect his daughter to be the object of it; and it matters not whether she was actually sacrificed as a burnt offering, or devoted to a life of perpetual virginity, either was enough to bring her father very low. He was unspeakably grieved to know

that his daughter, who was his only child, should be, in consequence of his vow, forever prevented from continuing his name in Israel. His family therefore was doomed to extinction. Any good and thoughtful man who realized that the end of his family was in sight would certainly be troubled. But regardless of the sacrifice involved, Jephthah was determined to be true to his vow. (Cf. Num. 30: 1, 2; Deut. 23: 21; Eccl. 5: 4, 5.)

*And she said unto him, My father, thou hast opened thy mouth unto Jehovah; do unto me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as Jehovah hath taken vengeance for thee on thine enemies, even on the children of Ammon.* It would be difficult to find a greater example of filial piety and obedience than the one which is exhibited here. This is true, whether the reference was to her being offered as a burnt-offering, or devoted to perpetual virginity; for she certainly loved life, and it was considered to be a great reproach among the Hebrews for a woman to have no children. But this daughter was willing to suffer whatever her father had decreed, because he had spoken and Jehovah had richly blessed him.

### A Request Granted and the Vow Fulfilled

(Judges 11: 37-40)

*And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may depart and go down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my companions. And he said, Go. And, he sent her away for two months: and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.* For the expression "go down upon the mountains" the King James Version has "go up and down upon the mountains." Her "companions" were probably those young women who were with her at the time she went forth to meet her father, as he returned from the victory over the Ammonites.

*And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew not man.* If the "whatsoever" of verse 31 was intended by

Jephthah to include *either* a person or an animal, and if he meant to offer that person or animal as a burnt-offering, regardless of any qualifying circumstances; then it will have to be assumed that Jephthah actually and literally offered his daughter upon the altar. This, as already indicated, is the view of many Bible students. Josephus, after mentioning her request for two months leave to bewail her virginity, says, "Accordingly, when that time was over, he sacrificed his daughter as a burnt-offering, offering such an oblation as was neither conformable to the law nor acceptable to God, not weighing with himself what opinion the hearers would have of such a practice." And Hastings notes, "But, right or wrong, Jephthah was a man of his word. And while we shudder at the awful sacrifice, we cannot but admire the grim determination of this half-wild, barbaric chieftain, as he holds to the terms of his terrible vow, and at the expense of rendering himself childless, proceeds to fulfil it."

If this is actually what happened, then we have a man upon whom the Spirit of Jehovah came (verse 29) and who is listed as one of the heroes of faith (Heb. 11: 32-34), offering a sacrifice which Jehovah abhorred (Lev. 18: 21; 20: 1-5; Jer. 32: 35; Deut. 12: 29-31), while himself not being reckoned as a priest (cf. 1 Sam. 13: 8-14) and was an illegitimate person (see Deut. 23: 2).

Jamieson, in answer to the question of how or what did he do with her, says, "Certainly he did not offer her in sacrifice. The immolation of a human victim had never been made by any Israelite who was a worshipper of the true God; and supposing the case of Jephthah was an exception, the offering of his daughter must either have been made at Shiloh, where the tabernacle, the only appointed place of sacrifice, was established, or at some place east of Jordan. But the sacrifice could not have been offered at Shiloh, not only because Jephthah was not likely to go to Shiloh, having a bitter feud with the Ephraimites, within whose territory it lay, but because no Levitical priest would have lent his services to put a human victim upon the altar of God; and if Jephthah

himself had immolated her at his own home, he would have incurred the triple guilt of the impious assumption of the priestly office, of offering at an unaccepted place, and presenting a sacrifice abhorrent to the law and character of God. Jephthah, who appears to have been a pious man (verse 11), and from his despatch to the Ammonite king (verses 14-27), well acquainted with the Mosaic history, would not have perpetrated any of these presumptuous sins; and hence we conclude that no sacrifice of the kind was made. Dropping, therefore the alternative part of the vow, and accepting the first part of it as that which Jephthah performed—viz., that whatsoever came forth of the doors of his house to meet him, when he returned in peace from the children of Ammon, should surely be the Lord's—we believe that his daughter was consecrated for life to the service of the sanctuary. This view is strengthened both by the significant clause, 'she knew no man,' being doomed to live unmarried—a disappointment particularly severe to a Hebrew damsel—and by the annual custom, which was thenceforth adopted by her female associates, of celebrating her deed of public devotion."

*And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah the Galeodite four days in a year.* After saying that he was not satisfied that this is a correct translation of the original, which he gives, Clarke records the translation of Houbigant in these words, "But this custom prevailed in Israel, that the virgins of Israel went at different times, four days in the year, to the daughter of Jephthah, that they might comfort her." This verse also gives evidence, in the view of Clarke, that the daughter of Jephthah was not sacrificed: nor does it appear that the custom or statute referred to here lasted after the death of Jephthah's daughter.

This is a question of textual criticism, into which we cannot enter here. The best we can do is to consider all the facts in the case, and then try to reach a conclusion in the light of the revelation which we have. With all the facts in hand, it seems

doubtful, to say the least of it, that Jephthah actually put his daughter to death. Our salvation, however, does not depend upon what happened to Jephthah's daughter; but our eter-

nal destiny does depend upon our attitude toward and our handling of the word of God. We should never be dogmatic where there is room for honest differences of opinion.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Discuss briefly the period between Gideon and Jephthah.  
State the highlights in the life of Jephthah prior to his judgeship.  
Under what circumstances did he become judge?  
In what way did Jephthah try to avoid war with the Ammonites?

#### Jephthah's Vow and Victory

In what sense did the Spirit of Jehovah come upon Jephthah?  
What effect did this have on Jephthah and the people?  
Over what territory did he pass? and why?  
What do the Scriptures indicate regarding the character of Jephthah?  
Why are there so many different opinions regarding his vow?  
What are the necessary conclusions regarding this vow?  
Would he have been justified in offering an unclean animal as a burnt-offering? Give reasons for your answer.  
Would the same principle apply to a human sacrifice? Why?  
What was the extent of Jephthah's victory over the children of Ammon?  
Tell something of the origin and character of the Ammonites.

#### From Victory to Irrepressible Grief

Why did Jephthah's daughter go out to meet her father?

How was he affected when he saw her?  
What were the possible reasons for his deep grief?  
What was Jephthah's attitude toward the vow which he had made?  
What lesson does this have for us?  
How did the daughter react to her father's words?

#### A Bequest Granted and the Vow Fulfilled

What was the request of Jephthah's daughter?  
Why did she want to bewail her virginity?  
How did her father feel regarding the request?  
What did he do when she returned unto him?  
Could Jephthah have fulfilled his vow without killing his daughter? Give reasons for your answer.  
If he offered her upon the altar, who would have to perform the rite?  
In the light of Deut. 12: 29-31, how could a man of faith (Heb. II: 32) offer a human sacrifice?  
What significance is attached to the statement "she know not man"?  
What custom in Israel grew out of this circumstance? and how long did it continue?  
In the light of all the facts we have, give reasons why you think Jephthah did or did not sacrifice his daughter upon the altar.  
What is the real problem in this lesson for us?

## Lesson VIII—May 21, 1961

### BIRTH OF SAMSON

#### Lesson Text

#### Judges 13: 2-7, 21-25

2 And there was a certain man of Zo'-rah, of the family of the Dan'-ites, whose name was Ma-no'-ah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

3 And the angel of Je-ho'-vah appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come upon his head; for the child shall be

a Naz'-i-rite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to save Is'-ra-el out of the hand of the Philis'-tines.

6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; and I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name:

7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing; for the child shall be a Naz'-i-rite

unto God from the womb to the day of his death.

21 But the angel of Je-ho'-vah did no more appear to Ma-no'-ah or to his wife. Then Ma-n6'-ah knew that he was the angel of Je-ho'-vah.

22 And Ma-no'-ah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

23 But his wife said unto him, If Je-ho'-vah were pleased to kill us,

he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meal-offering at our hand, neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would at this time have told such things as these.

24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and Je-ho'-vah blessed him.

25 And the Spirit of Je-ho'-vah began to move him in Ma'ha-neh'-dan, between Zo'-rah and Esh'-ta-ol.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And the child grew, and Jehovah blessed him." (Judges 13: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 13:1-8.

### Daily Bible Readings

May 15. M.....	Samson, the Nazarite (Judges 13: 2-6)
May 16. T.....	Parents of Samson (Judges 13: 8-14)
May 17. W.....	Origin of the Danites (Gen. 30: 1-24)
May 18. T.....	Teaching the Bible at Home (Deut. 6: 1-9)
May 19. F.....	Prayer of Manoah (Judges 13: 8)
May 20. S.....	Parents' Responsibility (Eph. 6: 1-8)
May 21. S.....	Nazarite Vow (Num. 6: 1-21)

TIME.—1161 B.C.

PLACE.—Zorah, in the southern part of Dan.

PERSONS.—The angel of Jehovah, Manoah, his wife, and Samson.

### Introduction

The story of Samson is one of the most singular and interesting narratives to be found in all the Old Testament. He was one of the line of judges, used by Jehovah for the deliverance of his people from their enemies; and his role in that capacity illustrates the power of God to deliver his people from their oppressors, without the aid of large armies and powerful military equipment. Wherever the record contains the details of the conflict with the oppressing power, it will be seen that the other judges were aided by their brethren; but Samson always fought alone. In fact, instead of his brethren helping him, they endeavored to deliver Samson to the enemy.

When one reads the Book of Judges, he will see that Samson was the last of the judges whose records are found in that part of the Bible. The records of the last two of the line of the judges—Eli and Samuel—are in the first part of First Samuel. But wherever we read about the work of the judges, the need for them is always the same; and so, as we are introduced to Samson, we read,

"And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah; and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." (Judges 13: 1.)

Notwithstanding the plainness of the record regarding the origin of Samson, many Bible students do not hesitate to say that the writer of the narrative now before us drew on popular oral folk tales for his story of Samson's life; but people who believe the Bible to be the word of God will not only hold fast to that which it says, but will also teach others to do the same. But in estimating the career of men like Samson, we are apt to be influenced by scruples which should have no place in our thinking. No one today has the right to judge Samson by the standard of the New Testament. He lived at a time when people were to a large extent alienated from God, and he did many things which are contrary to the way of strict piety. But he was used of God to accomplish his purpose, and is reckoned among the heroes of faith. (See Heb. 11: 32ff.)

## The Golden Text

This part of the lesson is a part of the regular text, and will therefore be considered in its proper place.

## The Text Explained

### The Birth and Character of the Child Foretold

(Judges 13: 2-7)

And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. The town of Zorah was near the border between Dan and Judah, and was therefore near the territory occupied by the Philistines, which was along the southwestern seacoast of Palestine. (See map.) It is interesting to note that the name "Dan," the father of the tribe to which Manoah belonged, means a "judge;" and that when Jacob foretold the fortunes of his sons, he said of Dan, "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider falleth backward." (Gen. 49: 16, 17; cf. Deut. 33: 32.) This does not necessarily mean that the reference was specifically to Samson, although it may have included him.

As one reads through the historical part of the Bible, he will come across the names of several outstanding men who were born of women who had long been kept from bearing children; for example, Isaac, Joseph, Samuel, and John the Baptist. The name of the mother of Samson is not recorded; she is listed only as the wife of Manoah.

And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. The "angel of Jehovah" was his special messenger to reveal unto this godly couple the fact that they would become the parents of a son. The expression is sometimes used to indicate a manifestation of Jehovah himself, and many Bible students hold that when the reference is to Jehovah that what was later known as the "Word" is meant. But regardless of the identity of the person in question, we know that Jehovah was revealing his will and plan to Manoah and his wife.

Now therefore beware, I pray thee,

and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: for, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come upon his head; for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Inasmuch as Samson was to be a Nazirite from the day of his birth, it was necessary for his mother to assume the regulations of the order during the time of her pregnancy. The requirements for the behavior of a Nazirite are set forth in the sixth chapter of Numbers, which should be read. Samson and John the Baptist are the two outstanding examples of the Nazirite which are found in the Bible. It is generally thought by Bible students that Paul's action in Acts 21: 23-26 was in connection with a Nazirite vow; and it is possible that the same kind of vow is referred to in Acts 18:18. The hair could never be cut or shaved during the time of the vow, with God's approval.

The Nazirite vow had a deep religious significance. It meant that the person who adopted it devoted himself wholly to the Lord. It was necessary for him to abstain for any—and everything connected with the grape, and to avoid all contact with the dead, even his closest relatives. This would be a constant reminder to him and all others of the purity which should be the law of his life. To state the same thing in other words, the Nazirite must abstain from all fleshly lusts, and hold himself pure as God's instrument, being ready at all times for whatever service Jehovah might require of him.

It is well to keep in mind that Samson was to "begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." And so we read, following the death of Samson, that he judged Israel twenty years; but the Philistines continued to plague Israel for many years longer. (Cf. 2 Chron 28: 18, 19.)

Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; and I asked

him not whence he was, neither told he me his name; but he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing; for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb to the day of his death. It is interesting to observe that the original for "terrible" in this passage is the same from which we have the term "reverend" in Psalm 111: 9. In fact, some versions render this latter passage, "Holy and terrible is his name." (See Smith and Goodspeed.) The Septuagint Version has "Holy and fearful is his name." Thus, the terrible appearance of the angel produced a feeling of fear or awe in the wife of Manoah.

As time went on during the period of the judges, the government which they exercised gradually gave way to that of a king. The children of Israel, characterized more and more by a spirit of apathy, had, at the time of this lesson, as already noted, fallen into subjection to the despised, uncircumcised Philistines. Whatever national spirit which had in the past characterized them was dying out, and the prestige of Jehovah was giving way to the prestige of Dagon, the god of the Philistines. The people of Jehovah were a conquered, tax-paying, Philistine-ridden race.

But Jehovah is never defeated in his purposes, and because he is ever in human history, such periods as the one now before us seem to produce, as it were, by an inevitable reaction, their own remedies. This is what happened in the days of Samson the Nazirite. The people of Jehovah, as has been repeatedly pointed out, were regarded as God's body on earth, in whom he dwelt and through whom he worked. But, as some one has noted, the mass of the people were entirely incapable of realizing such an ideal; and it appears that for that reason the presence of God in Israel came to be concentrated in and represented by certain orders of men, namely, the priests, the prophets, and the Nazirites. Those three orders run all through the history of Israel. (Cf. Amos 2: 11, 12.)

The Nazirites were not a party, but functioned as individuals. They were the total abstainers, and were sometimes thought of as the fanatics of the times. They allowed their hair to

grow long, that is, uncut, as the external mark of their consecration to God. Their abstinence from all produce of the grape was in marked contrast to the habits of luxury and self-indulgence which led by a natural tendency to Baal-worship. They represented, in the great epochs of Hebrew history, the salutary recoil from irreligion and immorality. This was to be the role of Samson all the days of his life.

### The Reaction of Manoah and His Wife to the Vision

(Judges 13: 21-23)

After his wife reported to him the vision of the angel, "Manoah entreated Jehovah, and said, Oh Lord, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born." This request was granted, but Manoah was not present when the angel returned. His wife, however, who was in the field, hastened to her husband and told him that the man had come again. They both came back to the place, and Manoah, after asking him if he were the one who had previously appeared to his wife, said, "Now let thy words come to pass: what shall be the ordering of the child, and how shall we do unto him?" The angel then repeated the instruction which he had given to the woman at the first.

Manoah then, not knowing that the man was the angel of Jehovah, asked that he remain with them, that they might make ready a kid for him; but he told them that any offering must be made to God. Manoah next asked his name, so that they might do him honor when his words came to pass. His simple reply was that it is wonderful (or, secret, margin), and after that, Manoah offered the sacrifice upon the rock unto Jehovah, and the angel did wondrously, while Manoah and his wife looked on. And as the flame from the altar ascended toward heaven, the angel of Jehovah ascended in it, as Manoah and his wife watched; and they fell on their faces to the ground.

But *the angel of Jehovah did not more appear to Manoah or to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die,*

because *we have seen God*. It apparently had long been the conviction of the Jewish people that any one who saw the face of God or his angel would certainly die. That belief probably grew out of such statements as the one Jehovah made to Moses, when he asked to see his glory, namely, "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live." (Ex. 33: 20; cf. Isa. 6: 5; Gen. 32: 30.) One would gather from Judges 13: 8, 12 that Manoah was filled with assurance regarding the child which was promised to them; but when he realized that he had actually seen the angel of Jehovah, his confusion was so great that he expected immediate death for both him and his wife. There was, of course, no foundation for the opinion which he entertained, notwithstanding its all but universal acceptance among the people of Israel.

But *his wife said unto him, If Jehovah were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meal-offering at our hand, neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would at this time have told such things as these*. Even the superficial reader will recognize this as very sound reasoning on the part of Manoah's wife, and it also reflects great faith. Matthew Henry thinks that this may have been why the angel appeared to the woman, rather than to her husband at first. But whatever may have been the reason for his coming to her first, it is easy to see that she was the one who offered the encouragement, when his heart began to fail. It has never been God's purpose to destroy those to whom his revealed will is acceptable.

This should be an impressive lesson to all of us. There will come into every life, even the lives of those most devoted to God, dark and cloudy dispensations of Divine Providence. (Cf. Heb. 12: 5-13.) But it should be our aim to train and cultivate our minds and attitudes toward God, so that we shall never lose faith in his manner of dealing with us. It is not his will that any should perish, but that all should do his will more perfectly. Many people are willing to rejoice in the sunshine, but are filled with misgivings when the clouds gather.

## The Birth, Name and Blessings of the Child

(Judges 13: 24, 25)

*And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and Jehovah blessed him*. The name "Samson" means "sunny" or "little sun," and the reference was probably to his disposition, rather than to his great strength. Samson was a child of promise, destined for a particular work; and it was for that reason that Jehovah blessed him. The blessings which came upon him were evident proofs that he was under the care and protection of Jehovah, who caused him to grow and develop daily for the work for which he had been sent.

*And the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol*. It is well to keep in mind that Jehovah's Spirit, as used in the Old Testament, refers to his life principle and the power by which he performed his diversified activities. And so, when his Spirit came upon a person whom he had chosen for a special work, that individual was fully prepared to accomplish all that was expected of him.

"Mahaneh-dan" means "the camp of Dan." (See marginal reading.) It was located near the home of Samson's parents (verse 2). We have no information as to what went on at that camp, but it may have been a place where some of the people gathered to oppose the activities of the Philistines; but whatever may have been the purpose of the camp, it was there that the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him, probably in some way which gave evidence that he would be a power against their enemies.

One of the significant statements found in the narrative regarding the birth of Samuel is in verse 12, namely, "what shall be the ordering of the child, and how shall we do unto him?" The implications of this question should not be overlooked; for some one or some thing is going to train every child. The following pertinent remarks from The Speaker's Bible should be carefully considered by every parent and teacher of young children.

"Children are not only capable of training but they will be trained in spite of us. They will be trained—*how* is quite another matter; but they will be trained. And if we do not take them in hand, with a very definite end in view, which we pursue with inflexible purpose and unflinching constancy—an end not lower than heaven, and not narrower than eternity, and not meaner than their salvation—another process will assuredly be going on, which will ere long fill us with dismay. We must know that children are always at school, even when they seem to be away from it. The question is not whether a child's mind shall be full or empty. It will not be empty. You cannot keep it empty. It has living passions, desires, purposes within it that will secure it against perpetual vacancy. They are like the tentacles of some aquatic animals,

which are incessantly stretched out to grasp food; and if you do not bring nourishment within their reach, they will stuff their minds with poison.

"Our children are being taught by everything they see, everything they hear. They are learning from their companions, and teaching them in turn. They are learning at home; learning at the corners of the streets; learning from fathers and mothers, and servants; learning in the playground; learning from books and pictures, from poetry and prose. Every day, whether we think of it or not, they are storing their minds with new words, new thoughts, new conceptions; and every day, too, their minds, which at first are like molten metal that may be poured into any mould and take any shape, are becoming stiffer and harder, and less sensitive to any influence except that to which they are most accustomed."

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Why is the story of Samson such a singular story?  
How is the record of Samson related to the Book of Judges?  
How many judges followed him?  
Why was it necessary for Samson to be raised up?  
In what way must we understand the character and work of Samson?

#### The Birth and Character of the Child Foretold

Who were the parents of Samson and where did they live?  
What interesting observation is seen in connection with the name "Dan"?  
Who were some of the other Bible men who were born to women who had been barren?  
What is signified by the "angel of Jehovah"?  
What message did he bring to the wife of Manoah?  
Why was it essential that she follow such strict regulations?  
Discuss the general character of a Nazirite.  
What impression would such a man make on the people about him?  
To what extent was Samson to save the Israelites from the Philistines?  
What report did the woman give to her husband?  
What is the significance of the term "terrible"?  
Show in what way a change was taking place in the government of Israel.  
Why was it essential that Nazirites live among the people?

#### The Reaction of Manoah and His Wife to the Vision

What request did Manoah make of the Lord?  
Discuss the circumstances of the second appearance of the angel.  
Why did Manoah feel that they had seen the angel of Jehovah and that they would die?  
Why did the people of the time of the Bible feel that way when they saw an angel?  
What was his wife's reaction to the question?  
In what way did she reason about the matter?  
How did she demonstrate her faith?  
What lesson should we get from the reactions of Manoah and his wife?

#### The Birth, Name, and Blessings of the Child

What did the name "Samson" signify?  
In what sense was he a "little sun"?  
Why would the blessing of Jehovah come upon him?  
In what way did the Spirit of Jehovah move Samson?  
Where did he begin to show evidence of his unusual character?  
What impression must he have made upon his people?  
Why was Manoah so interested in the training of his child?  
What effect should his attitude have upon us today?  
Why are children so easily trained?  
Discuss some ways in which this is done.  
Why can't a normal child's mind be kept empty?  
What else is happening to the minds of growing children?

Lesson IX—May 28, 196

DEATH OF SAMSON

Lesson Text

Judges 16:21-31

21 And the Phi-lis'-tines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Ga'-za, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house.

22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

23 And the lords of the Phi-lis'-tines gathered them together to offer a great sacrifice unto Da'-gon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hand our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, who hath slain many of us.

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made sport before them. And they set him between the pillars:

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house resteth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men

GOLDEN TEXT.—"So the dead that he slew at his death were more than they that he slew in his life." (Judges 16: 30.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 14: 1-20.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 22. M..... The Strength of Samson (Judges 14: 5, 6)
- May 23. T..... Test of Strength (Judges 15: 11-14)
- May 24. W..... Weakness of Samson (Judges 16: 15-21)
- May 25. T..... Dangers of Temptation (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)
- May 26. F..... Samson and Delilah (Judges 16: 1-22)
- May 27. S..... Foolish and Wicked Women (Prov. 7: 1-27)
- May 28. S..... The Death of Samson (Judges 16: 28-31)

TIME.—1120 B.C.

PLACE.—Gaza.

PERSONS.—Samson and the Philistines.

Introduction

The story of Samson and his dealings with the Philistines never grows old to Bible readers. His first active opposition to them was the result of

and women; and all the lords of the Phi-lis'-tines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28 And Samson called unto Je-ho'-vah, and said, O Lord Je-ho'-vah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Phi-lis'-tines for my two eyes.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and leaned upon them, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Phi-lis'-tines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead that he slew at his death were more than they that he slew in his life.

31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zo'-rah and £sh-t§-61 in the burying-place of Ma-no'-ah his father. And he judged ts'-ra-61 twenty years.

a love affair. While visiting in the town of Timnah, he saw a Philistine woman there whom he decided to marry; and when he returned to his

home he practically ordered his parents to get her for him. They were greatly disturbed, but all attempts to reason with him were in vain. Samson simply replied, "Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well." The parents did not understand that Jehovah was directing all of this; for he wanted an occasion against the Philistines.

When Samson and his parents went to Timnah to see the woman whom he wanted, they met a young lion when they neared the city; and when the beast roared against him, Samson, with the help of the Spirit of Jehovah, "rent him as he would have rent a kid; and he had nothing in his hand." He did not, however, tell his parents what he had done. Later on, when they went to Timnah for the wedding, Samson turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and he found in it a swarm of bees with honey. He took some of the honey and ate it as he walked along, and gave some to his parents and they ate; but he did not tell them where he got it. During the wedding feast he proposed a riddle and offered to give the thirty young men who were his companions at the feast "thirty linen garments and thirty changes of raiment," if they could declare the riddle within seven days; but stipulating that if they did not, they would have to give him the specified rewards. The riddle was,

Out of the eater came forth  
food,

And out of the strong came forth  
sweetness.

The men of Timnah were wholly unable to guess the riddle, and they threatened the bride and her father's house with death by burning if she did not find out from Samson the answer. She, accordingly, spent the seven days of the feast weeping before him, and saying that he did not love her; because he had not told her what the riddle was. Finally, unable to resist her tears further, he told her on the seventh day, and she, of course, told her people; and so before the sun went down, they said, "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" Samson's reply was,

If ye had not plowed with my  
heifer,

Ye had not found out my riddle.  
The Spirit of Jehovah then came

mightily upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, smote thirty men, took their clothing, and paid his wager. He was filled with anger, and returned to his father's house; "but Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend."

Later on, during wheat harvest, Samson decided to visit his wife, but her father would not permit him to go in. He then told Samson what he had done, and offered him her younger sister instead. Samson, however, was not as gracious as Jacob was. He not only declined the offer, but went out and caught three hundred foxes, tied a firebrand to the tails of each two, and turned them loose in the standing grain fields of the Philistines, with the result that all their grain, along with their oliveyards, was destroyed. The Philistines learned that Samson did this because his wife had been given to another, and they went up and burned her and her father with fire. Samson, in turn, "smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; and he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam."

After the circumstances just related, "the Philistines went up, and encamped in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi." When the men of Judah asked why they had come up against them, the Philistines replied, "To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us." Then three thousand men of Judah went down to Etam where Samson was, and asked him if he didn't know that the Philistines were rulers over them. Samson then explained why he had acted as he did against the enemy, but the men of Judah informed him that they had come to bind him, that they might deliver him into the hands of the Philistines. They refused his plea that they themselves would not bind him, and he accordingly allowed his brethren to bind him with two new ropes. This greatly pleased the Philistines, for they shouted when they saw him; but the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and picking up the jawbone of an ass which he saw there, he smote a thousand men.

Following the episode at Lehi, Samson next went to Gaza, where he saw a harlot and went in unto

her. The men of the city heard that he was there, and they decided to watch at the closed gates all night, and take him the next morning. But Samson arose at midnight, pulled up the two posts, and carried all that pertained to the gate to the top of the mountain which was before Hebron. But that which proved Samson's undoing was his experience with the treacherous Delilah whom he loved.

"And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and shaved off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free. But he knew not that Jehovah was departed from him."

### The Golden Text

This part of the lesson will be considered when we reach it in the body of the lesson text.

### The Text Explained

#### Tragedy and a Second Chance

(Judges 16: 21, 22)

*And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house.* The story of Samson's relation with Delilah is one of the most graphic narratives in the Old Testament. We are not told whether she was a Philistine, a Hebrew, or of some other origin, but it would be difficult to find a more despicable character than she. Bribed by the lords of the Philistines to discover and reveal the source of her lover's great strength, she succeeded after three fruitless efforts, and turned him over to his enemies. But Samson himself was not without blame in the matter. He is a living example of what happens to a man who dallies with temptation.

We can easily imagine the glee which the Philistines manifested when they got their hands on the helpless Samson; and they probably lost no time in putting out his eyes. The practice of depriving prisoners of rank and influence of their sight seems to have been a common custom of that day. (See 2 Kings 25: 7; cf. Ezek. 12:13.) This type of punishment appears to have been inflicted in various ways. Jamieson says that it was done by piercing the eye, or destroying the sight by holding a red-hot iron before the eyes, or by scooping out the eye-balls, which was the punishment meted out to rebels and formidable enemies.

The Philistines not only deprived Samson of his eye-sight; they also bound him in fetters of brass, rather than with some of the less durable

materials with which they had previously bound him. He was then forced to perform the menial service which was reserved for slaves, no doubt to emphasize his overwhelming degradation. This picture of Samson is one of the most pathetic to be found, even in the Bible. Job sitting in the ashes and cursing the day of his birth does not contain as much tragedy, and Jeremiah almost reaches the sublime of pathos as he bemoans the lost condition of his beloved land; but it is doubtful if there is anything to equal the pathetic state of the once mighty Samson, now utterly beaten and wholly ruined, as he sits at the mill forsaken by both God and man. (Cf. Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

*Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.* It is here that we can get an idea of the gospel of a second chance—not a second chance after death, but a second chance in this life. If it were not for the gospel of a second chance, all of us would be doomed to eternal destruction. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) But the fact that God does give sinful people another chance, in no way implies that any one is justified in doing wrong, while taking for granted that he will be given another opportunity to do right. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 25, 26.)

#### Premature Rejoicing

(Judges 16: 23-27)

*And the lords of the Philistines gathered them together to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy*

into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hand our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, who hath slain many of us. Dagon, the god of the Philistines was a sea-idol, with the head and upper part of the body that of a human, while the lower part was that of a fish. Dagon was also the god of other people, as may be seen by consulting any good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia. There were temples erected to Dagon in the Philistine cities of Gaza and Ashdod, and probably in others, too. Three principal incidents are mentioned in the Bible in connection with the shrine of this false god, namely, (1) the one in the lesson now under consideration; (2) the punishment which came upon the people of Ashdod because the ark of Jehovah was carried into the temple of Dagon, 1 Sam. 5: 1-7; (3) the head of Saul, following his death in battle, was fastened in the house of Dagon, 1 Chron. 10:1-10. Although the lords of the Philistines knew that they had bribed Delilah into getting the secret of Samson's great strength from him, and that when his hair was shaved from his head, he was like other men; they, nevertheless, gave the credit for his capture to their god Dagon.

And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, *Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made sport before them.* It appears to have been a custom among heathen nations, on the occasions of great rejoicing and thanksgiving to their gods, to bring their war prisoners from their places of confinement or slavery, and heap upon them every kind of indignity; and what could please them more than to offer these insults to Samson, the destroyer of their country, as they said, and the slayer of many of them? We are not told what type of sport Samson was called upon to perform; but it was something which caused them to laugh, and deride him. We can well imagine how they would roar with laughter as the once mighty man would stumble in his perpetual darkness, and it could well have been that they were calling upon him to demonstrate the extraordinary strength which characterized him be-

fore they took him into custody. It was also probably significant that they had a lad, rather than a man, holding him by the hand.

And they set him between the pillars: and Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, *Suffer vie that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house resteth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.* We are not told whether this was the temple of Dagon, the prison-house, or some other building; but whatever it was, it was enormous. Jamieson says that "this building seems to have been similar to the spacious and open amphitheatres well known among the Romans, and still found in many countries of the East. They are built wholly of wood. The standing-place for the spectators is a wooden floor resting chiefly upon two midmost pillars, and rising on an inclined plane, so as to enable all to have a view of the area in the centre. In the middle there are two large beams, on which the whole weight of the structure lies, and these beams are supported by two pillars placed almost close to each other, so that when these are unsettled or displaced, the whole pile must tumble to the ground. Samson probably understood the nature of the structure; and since he had been set between the pillars, he may have made it appear that he wanted to rest himself against them because of his weariness in making sport.

### Samson Avenged in Death

(Judges 16: 28-31)

And Samson called unto Jehovah, and said, *O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.* Although blinded by the Philistines, Samson began to recover his inward sight: and it appears that the old vow of the Nazirite was again being renewed in his heart. It had been his at the beginning; and now he wants to make it his at the end. He no doubt realized that he would never be able to see with his physical eyes again; but there was still opportunity for him to see the face of God. This meant that

the day of Samson's disgrace was also the day of God's grace; and he had the faith (Heb. 11:32) to claim that grace.

Samson's fall had resulted, not only in his own disgrace and suffering, but also in the further humiliation of his people; and now he is willing to die, if only he can recover their freedom. The Philistines saw him broken, old, and blind, both as he ground at the prison mill and as he made sport for them; they never suspected, nor would they have believed, that the old fire of his younger days was beginning to burn in him again.

*And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and leaned upon them, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead that he slew at his death were more than they that he slew in his life.* Samson no doubt was greatly distressed as the crowd jeered and mocked, but there was something which affected him more than that which they were doing to him. In ascribing their praise to Dagon, they were exalting him as the conqueror of both Jehovah and Samson; so that in mocking Samson, they were in reality mocking Jehovah. And then, like an echo from the past, there came to him a sense of the Divine presence, and his swift resolution. He was willing to die, if only he could perform one act which would undo the injury which he had done to Jehovah and his people.

And Samson's faith was equal to the occasion. The strength of the Nazirite was again his, and the old convictions surged through him, with the result that his whole being was flooded with the tide of sacred passion. Thus, we see him standing in the dignity of his newly won manhood with his face toward the mocking crowd which he could not see. But he could see God with the eyes of faith, and with the Divine power upon him, we see him gathering soul and muscle for his final testimony against the evil influences which had harassed his people so long. Imagination can still behold the scene—the tragic, stately form bowing itself

against the central pillars of the building, the gaping roof, the appalling avalanche of timbers, and the screaming men and women reaping that which they had sown. But Samson's vow had been kept.

Jamieson notes that Samson's penitent and prayerful spirit seems clearly to indicate that this meditated act was not that of a vindictive suicide, and that he regarded himself as putting forth his strength in the capacity of a public magistrate. He must be considered therefore as dying for his country's cause; and his death was not designed or sought, except as it might be the inevitable consequence of his great effort at saving his people, as well as avenging himself of the Philistines. And whether his prayer was audible or simply uttered in the heart, it is clear that it was both approved and accepted of God. Samson was simply carrying out God's will in meting out justice to sinful people.

*Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.* The graceful end of this man of might followed the stormy scene of the riotous assembly and the sudden destruction. It appears that the Philistines who survived the crash made no effort to prevent Samson's brethren from recovering his body, and bearing it to the grave among the hills of Dan, where his father slept. The penitent heroism which marked Samson's last days makes us lenient to emphasize his faults; and this is especially true, since the writer of Hebrews numbers him among the great men of faith. In closing his remarks concerning Samson, Josephus says,

"And indeed this man deserves to be admired for his courage and strength, and magnanimity at his death, and that his wrath against his enemies went so far as to die himself with them. But as for his being ensnared by a woman, that is to be ascribed to human nature, which is too weak to resist the temptations to that sin; but we ought to bear him witness, that in all other respects he was one of extraordinary virtue-----"

**Questions for Discussion**

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

**Introduction**

Why is the story of Samson always interesting to Bible readers?  
 What was the occasion of his first opposition to the Philistines?  
 Trace the steps in this incident.  
 What riddle did Samson propose, and what was the result?  
 What was the next blow which Samson dealt the Philistines? and why?  
 What did the Philistines next do, and who aided them?  
 Why was Samson able to manifest such prodigious strength?  
 What experience did he have in Gaza one night?  
 Tell of the manner in which his downfall came?

**Tragedy and a Second Chance**

What is your estimate of the character of Delilah?  
 What does the example of Samson illustrate?  
 How were the Philistines affected when they got hold of Samson?  
 What kind of treatment did they administer to him? and why?  
 Why bind him in fetters of brass?  
 What work was he compelled to do? and why?  
 What is implied in the statement that his hair began to grow again?  
 What is the significance of the gospel of the second chance?

**Premature Rejoicing**

How did the Philistines show their gratitude for the capture of Samson?

What was the nature of their god?  
 What are the principal incidents which happened in connection with Dagon?  
 Why did the Philistines ascribe the deliverance of Samson into their hands to their god?  
 How did they propose to entertain themselves at their feast?  
 How did they seek to humiliate Samson?  
 Where did they place him?  
 What was the probable nature of the building in which they were?  
 Where did Samson ask the lad to lead him?

**Samson Avenged in Death**

What prayer did Samson utter, and what did it imply?  
 In what way did he demonstrate his faith?  
 Why is faith so vital to any life?  
 What was the general result of Samson's fall?  
 Why didn't the Philistines suspect that Samson was planning vengeance on them?  
 What was there about the jeering Philistines which probably affected him most?  
 Why was Samson willing to die with the Philistines?  
 Describe the mighty act which killed so many people.  
 What appears to have been Samson's purpose in all this?  
 What happened to his body after the catastrophe?  
 Give a general appraisal of the character of Samson.

**Lesson X—June 4, 1961**

**RUTH CHOOSES THE TRUE GOD**

**Lesson Text**

**Ruth 1:1, 7-18**

1 And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth'-le-hem-ju'-dah went to sojourn in the country of Mo'-ab, he, and his wife and his two sons.

7 And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Ju'-dah.

8 And Na-o'-mi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house: Je-ho'-vah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 Je-ho'-vah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Na-o'-mi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have a husband to-night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye therefore tarry till

they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands? nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of Je-ho'-vah is gone forth against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Or'-pah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Je-ho'-vah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."* (Ruth 1: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ruth 1: 1-22.

### Daily Bible Readings

May 29. M.....	Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1: 6-13)
May 30. T.....	A Faithful and True Daughter (Ruth 1: 14-22)
May 31. W.....	Gleaning in the Field of Boaz (Ruth 2: 1-7)
June 1. T.....	Ruth Becomes the Wife of Boaz (Ruth 4: 9-12)
June 2. F.....	Christ Descended from Ruth (Ruth 4: 14-17; Matt. 1: 5)
June 3. S.....	The Generations of Pharez (Ruth 4: 18-22)
June 4. S.....	A Good Man and a Faithful Woman (Ruth 3: 1-18)

TIME.—1181-1171 B.C.

PLACES.—Moab and Bethlehem.

PERSONS.—Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth.

### INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament Scriptures do not reveal a sweeter nor more beautiful character than that of Ruth, nor does any literature contain a lovelier story than the one found in the book from which our lesson is taken. Goethe at the period of his enthusiasm for the East, according to Humboldt, called the story the loveliest specimen of epic and idyllic poetry which we possess. War and bloodshed and many of the sinful practices which are common to the fallen race are found in Judges and First Samuel, which precede and follow the book from which our lesson for today is taken, but between them is the Book of Ruth, which has been described as a beautiful valley full of flowers and fertile fields and with a gentle brook quietly singing as it flows through the meadow. The Book of Ruth is a wonderful story of love and of holy character, and it fills that part of the Old Testament with its fragrance.

Richard G. Moulton notes that the story of Ruth is the very ideal type of the Idyll. He continues, "So delicate in its transparent simplicity that the worse service one can do the

story is to comment on it. Suffice it to say, that the warp and woof of the tale is a friendship between two women, and the grand climax up to which all is working is the birth of a baby. Instead of war, of national strife, of political struggle, we have here great harvest festivals, ceremonial transfers of land, family contingencies such as hard times and emigration, marriage, and the strange process by which an extinct family might be restored to the genealogies of Israel: such little things as are great to the little man of every day life. Even in the little there are gradations: in this book are found such minutia as attentions shown to a shy stranger girl at the harvest feast, petty contrivances for giving her unfair advantages in the gleaning field; details still more minute—how Ruth pockets the scraps at the feast to bring home to her mother-in-law, who has been sitting solitary at home while she herself has had the excitement of the harvesting. Trifles like these, fitted into their natural frame the idyll, have kept afloat over some thirty centuries of time; and this story has done more to enable us to

live over again in remote Hebrew antiquity than all the heroic achievements of *Joshua* and *Judges* put together."

It is not known when or by whom the Book of Ruth was written. The events of the narrative transpired in the days when the judges judged. The story begins with a famine in the land, and the migration of a family from Bethlehem to Moab. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot's son by his older daughter (see Gen.

19: 30-38), and their country was east of the Dead Sea, between the brooks of Arnon on the north, and Zered on the south. It is said that the mountains of Moab could be seen from Bethlehem. (Cf. Deut. 34: 1-3.) Chemosh was the god of the Moabites, and they were the mortal enemies of Israel. (See Deut. 23:3, 4.) This is the general setting of the lesson for today, and all who study it will profit greatly by reading the entire Book of Ruth.

### The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson, being found in the regular text, will be treated in its regular order.

## The Text Explained

### From Bethlehem to Moab

(Ruth 1:1)

*And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land.* It is well to note the indefinite manner in which the narrative now before us begins. The time of action was during the period of the judges, but there is no information regarding the identity of the writer or when he composed the record. The Encyclopedia Americana sums up the question in these words: "The date of the little history contained in this book cannot be precisely fixed. Who the writer of the book was is also unknown. Some have ascribed it to Samuel; others have placed it as late as the Babylonish captivity; whilst several of the best modern scholars regard it as post-exilic. On the other hand, the style of the narrative connects it with the period when the Hebrew language and literature were still in full vigor and freshness, not with the period of their decay. . . ."

*And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.* The name of this man was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and their two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. The occasion for their leaving their home and going to Moab was a famine in their country. Sometime after reaching Moab, Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. Sometime after the death of their father, the two sons married women of Moab, Mahlon married Ruth (4:10), while the wife of Chilion was Orpah. About ten years after

their arrival in Moab, the two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, also died. This, of course, left the widowed Naomi with two widowed daughters-in-law. (See verses 2-5.) We learn from verse 6 that "she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread."

### The Call of Home

(Ruth 1:7-14)

*And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.* The essence of home is to be found in persons, rather than in locality. When therefore one has the presence and fellowship of those who are nearest and dearest to him, it is easy to be at home anywhere. But when the ones he loves are gone, the fairest surroundings will not fill the void which their absence has made. It is then that the heart longs for that which strangers cannot give, and old memories create a yearning for the old home of earlier days.

It was natural therefore that Naomi, after the death of her husband and sons, should be drawn again toward Bethlehem. So strong was her longing for the home of her fathers that she determined to return there at once. Forlorn, widowed, desolate, and destitute, she longed for that which Moab could not give. A famine in the fields of Bethlehem had taken her to Moab; but now a famine in the heart sends her home again. Hav-

ing heard that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread, she arose, and set out for her native place.

*And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house: Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.* It was probably customary for relatives or friends to accompany one who was leaving them a part of the way of the journey. It does not appear that Naomi expected these two young women to go with her all the way, at least without understanding what they were doing; but from the sequence of the story, one would gather that Ruth had already made up her mind not to leave her mother-in-law. The land of Judah was the southern part of Palestine, the section in which Bethlehem was located.

They may have reached the river Arnon, the northern boundary of Moab, or the fords of the Jordan, the eastern border of Judah. It seems rather strange that Naomi, after teaching these young women about the true God, would encourage them to return to idolatry again. This consideration lends credence to the idea that Naomi did not want them to follow her into a strange land, unless they were fully aware of that which they were doing. She did not want them to accompany her because of any false hopes which they might entertain. If they go, they must do so in the full light of the facts. The words "Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me" constituted a noble benediction. Any one who is kind and merciful to others may expect to receive similar treatment. (Cf. Matt. 5:7; Gal. 6:7.)

*Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept.* A married woman's home was called "a resting place" or "an asylum"; and it was only in the house of a husband that she could be sure of respect and protection. It appears that in the olden times, people could not see how there could be a home without some man at the head of it—the household in whom all family arrangements centered. It probably had not seemed strange to Ruth and Orpah that Hebrew men would marry

women of other races; but if they should go to Bethlehem, it would not be as likely that they would be welcomed into the families of the Israelites. And so, if they expected to marry again, it would, in the eyes of Naomi, have to be in their own land. After saying these things to them, she kissed each of them, and they all wept together.

*And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have a husband to-night, and should also bear sons; would ye therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of Jehovah is gone forth against me.* Regardless of how much they may have wanted to go with her, or how much she wanted them to go, Naomi was confronted with the difficult task of making her daughters-in-law understand what the situation would be in Bethlehem, if they did actually go. They probably did not know that their husbands sinned against the law of Jehovah in marrying them, which was easier for them to do in another country; but that sin was not likely to be repeated by Israelites living in their own land. These women, of course, did not expect to marry any sons who might later be born to Naomi, and the question naturally arises, why did she make such a suggestion or ask such questions? It was evidently to convey to them that if they should go with her, they would have no hope but in herself.

*And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.* It appears that they now realized conditions as they had not done before; and it was then that Orpah bade her mother-in-law farewell, but Ruth would not let her go without her. In addition to the actual facts of the narrative, these two young women can be made to stand for two types of friends. One will weep and sympathize with us when we are in trouble, pour out a profusion of re-

grets and protestations of love, and even kiss us passionately, but when all is said and done they will leave us to our fate, and turn and seek their own fortunes. But there are other friends who will cling to us in life and in death, and who will do everything possible for us, even at the sacrifice of their own welfare.

### Ruth's Choice and Its Meaning

(Ruth 1:15-18)

*And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law.* So far as the record is concerned, there was nothing in the character of Orpah which was not sweet and womanly; but because she did not choose the better part, oblivion has claimed her for ever. Ruth, too, had to make a choice, and, in the words of James Hastings, her passionate outburst of tenderness is immortal. It has put into fitting words for all generations the deepest thoughts of loving hearts, and comes to us over the centuries as warm and living as when it was spoken by that gentle and heroic soul.

The two strongest emotions of our nature are blended in Ruth's choice, namely, love and religion; and each gives to it a portion of its fervor. To love is to give one's self away, therefore all lesser givings are its food and delight; and when Ruth threw herself upon Naomi's withered breast, and sobbed out her passionate resolve, she was speaking the eternal language of love, and claiming Naomi for her own, in the very act of giving herself to Naomi. We hear in Ruth's words also that forsaking of all things which is an essential of all true religion. Her declaration closes with a vow to Israel's God, which resulted in the dethroning of Chemosh for ever. It exalts Jehovah as her future guide and shield, and as such we need not scruple to call it her "conversion." We have seen how human love wrought sacrifice in Ruth, but it was not human love alone that did it. The cord which drew her was twisted of two strands, and her love to Naomi melted into her love for Naomi's God.

*And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall*

*be my people, and thy God my God;* There are few words in the Old Testament which are better known than these, and those of the following verse. They have, as some one had observed, a lyrical swing, and the entire passage is truly poetical. Ruth simply asked Naomi not to make any further effort to get her to return to her former home and god. She had deliberately cast her lot with her mother-in-law, and there was nothing which could induce her to revoke that decision.

Some one has said that the quality of decision is one of the most important properties a person can have. This is true because there is no life, however uneventful it may be, which is not called upon at some time or another to exercise it. There are moments when the soul must say, "I will," or "I will not," or for ever hold its peace. There are at least three great choices which most people must make, namely, the choice of work, the choice of love, and the choice of God, and each of these is in some measure reflected in the choice of Ruth.

Ruth had never lived in Naomi's country, and she did not know what hardships she might be called on to suffer there; but that made no difference to her. The loadstone of love had touched her heart, and so long as she could be with the object of her devotion, she was not concerned about the direction. And it is not out of place here to note that the soul which is truly converted to Christ knows how to keep by the side of his people. After we once understand the Lord and our relation to him, the world loses its charm for us.

The people of Naomi were the very ones which Ruth had always been taught to hate. It is altogether possible that her brothers or other kinspeople had in times past gone to war with them; but notwithstanding all that, she was now casting her lot with them. This shows that there are closer ties than those of nationality, or even blood.

Ruth would not think of being a secret idolater in the Lord's land, as all too many are. She possibly could have gone with Naomi to Bethlehem, and have been introduced into the society of Israel, while at the same time continuing, in the secret shrine of her

heart, the worship of her old gods. But that would not have been the Ruth the Bible pictures.

*Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.* This was not a useless addition to Ruth's resolution. There was no thought of returning, so far as she was concerned. It never occurred to her to go and see how she might like the new country and its religion, and then perhaps return to her native land later. She, in effect, burned all bridges behind her. To be buried in the sepulchre

of some family is to be recognized as belonging to the family kinship; and it is possibly true that there is no other recognition which is so hard to obtain, or so difficult to lose. And in order to emphasize her determination to remain true to her resolution, she virtually called upon Jehovah to bring upon her some great punishment if she failed.

*And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.* When once a decision for the right is made, temptation loses its power for the person who made it.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What is your general impression of the story of Ruth?  
Why is it such a lovely narrative?  
What is its relation to the Books of Judges and First Samuel?  
Give a summary of the entire Book of Ruth.  
What is known of the author and time of composition?  
Where was the land of Moab?

#### From Bethlehem to Moab

Who were the members of the family involved in this story?  
Why did they leave their country and go to Moab?  
Tell of their experiences while in that country.  
What did Naomi decide to do after the death of her sons?

#### The Call of Home

What is the essence of home and where is it found?  
Why did Naomi feel as she did about returning to Bethlehem?  
Why did her daughters-in-law start with her and what did she say to them?  
Why would she advise them to return to their former way of living?  
What blessing did she pronounce upon them and why?  
Why are merciful people usually the recipients of mercy?  
What did Naomi mean by rest in the house of her husband?  
How did the people of that time feel about the husband of a family?  
What would have been the difference in

their marrying Israelites in Moab and in Judah?  
What difficult task was before Naomi when they announced their intention of going with her to Bethlehem?  
What method did she use to show them what was in store for them?  
How did the two young women react to her argument?  
What important lesson can we learn from Ruth and Orpah about friendship?

#### Ruth's Choice and Its Meaning

What was the final result of Orpah's choice?  
Why is the choice of Ruth so marvelous?  
What two emotions of our nature are involved in it?  
What is the real meaning of love?  
Why is forsaking so essential to all true religion?  
What was the nature of the cord which drew Ruth to her great decision?  
Repeat the words of Ruth's choice.  
Why do these words have such a hold on people today?  
Why did she ask Naomi not to make any further effort to dissuade her?  
Why is the quality of decision so valuable?  
What can you say about the universality of the need for making decisions?  
What are some of the great choices of life?  
Why was Ruth so confident about living in the land of Naomi?  
What will a truly converted child of God always do? Why?  
What had probably been Ruth's attitude toward the people of Israel?  
What was involved in her choice of Jehovah?  
Why did she say that she would die and be buried with Naomi?  
What is the effect of a firm decision?

## Lesson XI—June 11, 1961

## ELI AND HIS SONS

## Lesson Text

1 Sam. 2: 12, 32-25; 4: 12-18

12 Now the sons of E'-li were base men; they knew not Je-ho'-vah.

22 Now E'-li was very old; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Is'-ra-el, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting.

23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings from all this people.

24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make Je-ho'-vah's people to transgress.

25 If one man sin against another, God shall judge him; but if a man sin against Je-ho'-vah, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because Je-ho'-vah was minded to slay them.

12 And there ran a man of Ben'-ja-min out of the army, and came to Shi-loh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, E'-li was sitting upon his seat by the way-

side watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

14 And when E'-li heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man hastened, and came and told E'-li.

15 Now E'-li was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set, so that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto E'-li, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my son?

17 And he that brought the tidings answered and said, Is'-ra-el is fled before the Phi-lis'-tines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hoph'-ni and Phin'-e-has, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that E'-li fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Is'-ra-el forty years.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only deluding your own selves." (James 1: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 4: 1-11.

## Daily Bible Readings

June 5. M.....	Institution of the Priesthood (Ex. 28: 1-5)
June 6. T.....	Service before God (Ex. 28: 30-39)
June 7. W.....	Servant of the Sanctuary (Num. 18: 1-7)
June 8. T.....	Melchizedek, High Priest (Gen. 14: 17-25)
June 9. F.....	An Unfaithful Priest (1 Sam. 2: 27-35)
June 10. S.....	An Unfaithful Priest Punished (1 Sam. 4: 12-18)
June 11. S.....	Christ, Our Great High Priest (Heb. 5: 1-10)

TIME.—1165 B.C.

PLACE.—Shiloh.

PERSONS.—Eli, his sons, and a messenger from the battlefield.

## Introduction

Eli was one of the tragic figures of the Old Testament. He was personally a good man, and it appears that his administration, both as high priest and judge, was characterized by justice and righteousness; but he failed

miserably in dealing with his sons who were priests under him. This proved to be his besetting sin, as may be seen by reading Jehovah's message to Samuel regarding him. "And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will

do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever." (1 Sam. 3:11-14.)

It appears from Lev. 10:1, 2, 12; 1 Kings 2: 27; 1 Chron. 24: 3; 2 Sam. 8:17 that Eli was descended from Aaron through Ithamar, the youngest son of the first high priest. (Cf. Num. 20:25-28.) Josephus says that Eli was the first of the family of Ithamar to receive the high priesthood. It is not known how the office ever came into the youngest branch of the house of Aaron, but it is quite evident from

1 Sam. 2:27-30 that it was no unauthorized usurpation on the part of Eli. With the removal of Abiathar, the high priesthood was transferred back to the family of Eleazar, the older brother of Ithamar. (See 1 Kings 2: 27, 35; cf. Josephus, p. 238.)

In addition to his high priesthood, Eli acted as judge of Israel, being the immediate predecessor of Samuel who was the last of the judges. Eli judged Israel for forty years, and was the first to hold that office who was of priestly descent. His two sons, who, as already noted, were priests under him, conducted themselves so outrageously as to create disgust on the part of the people and rendered the services of the temple odious in their eyes. Eli was aware of this sinful conduct, but he contented himself with only mild and ineffectual remonstrances, instead of severe and vigorous action. This should be an impressive lesson to Christians who are in authority today.

### The Golden Text

*"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves."* James, from whose writing this statement is taken, has been referred to as the practical writer of the New Testament. He consistently shows the difference between simply hearing the word, and doing that which it teaches. For example, "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith [faith comes by hearing the word], but have not works? can that faith save him?" (James 2:14.) And then in the remainder of the paragraph, he cites several examples to show the ineffectiveness of anything short of obedience to that which the word enjoins.

The words of James which form our golden text for today are but an echo of the statement of Jesus at the close of his sermon on the mount. "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not:

for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof." (Matt. 7:24-27.) No other writer of the New Testament has more in common with the Sermon on the Mount, than James.

Any person who thinks that it is not necessary to do that which he hears from the teaching of inspiration, is deceived, that is, he deceives himself; and those who are deceived will not do the will of God. The seriousness of this matter of deception is seen when we consider the fact that it is mentioned three times in the first chapter of James. (See verses 16, 22, 26.) Man is a responsible being, and God expects him not only to hear his law, but to put into practice that which he has commanded. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.)

### The Text Explained

#### The Character of Eli's Sons

(1 Sam. 2:12)

*Now the sons of Eli were base men:*

*they knew not Jehovah.* The term "base" literally means worthless or extremely wicked. For "base men,"

the King James Version has "sons of Belial," that is, *sons of worthlessness*. (Cf. Deut. 13: 13; Judges 19: 22; 20: 13.) These men were not only careless and irreligious, but also loose in their conduct, and vicious and scandalous in their habits. Notwithstanding the fact that they were professing priests, they had no interest in the religion which belonged to the altar of Jehovah. They not only had thrown off its restraints, but had gone to the other extreme of reckless and open profligacy.

In saying that they knew not Jehovah, the idea is not that they did not have any information regarding him, but that they refused to have him in their knowledge. Paul describes the same abandoned condition in the first chapter of Romans. ". . . because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. . . . And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; . . ." (See Rom. 1:18-32.)

The inspired historian, after stating the type of men Eli's sons were, has this to say about them: "And the custom of the priests with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was boiling, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took therewith. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. Yea, before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have boiled flesh of thee, but raw. And if the man say unto him, They will surely burn the fat first, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would say, Nay, but thou shalt give it me now; and if not, I will take it by force. And the sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah; for the men despised the offering of Jehovah." (1 Sam. 2:13-17; cf. Mal. 2:1-9.)

That which is said regarding the sons of Eli is in direct contrast with the character and conduct of Samuel. "But Samuel ministered before Je-

hovah, ..." Both Samuel and they were under the influence of the same father, the same high-priest. They served in the same tabernacle, but how different were their lives! It is also well to note again that it was Samuel through whom Jehovah revealed to Eli the fate of his family; and that may account for the break in the historical account of Eli's sons, that is, that being the reason why the statement regarding Samuel was injected into the narrative. (See 1 Sam. 2:18-21, and compare the paragraphs before and after that passage.)

### An Ineffectual Reproof

(1 Sam. 2: 22-25)

*Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting.* The women in question were probably those who performed service in connection with the requirements of the tent of meeting. In speaking of the various articles of service made by Bezalel, the record says, "And he made the laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, of the mirrors of the ministering women that ministered at the door of the tent of meeting." (Ex. 38: 8.) It would have been an abominable practice for these men to have gone to the houses of prostitution for this wicked purpose; but for them to profane the sacred precincts of God's place of worship, and seduce the women who were engaged in his service, was a crime almost beyond description. (Cf. Num. 25:6-9; Jer. 5:7, 8.)

It is reasonable to assume that the wickedness of these sons of Eli had been going on for some time, and their father must have known about it before the time of this lesson; but he apparently did nothing but administer a mild rebuke. It has already been pointed out that Jehovah said to Samuel, "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not." (1 Sam. 3:13.) In spite of his apparent goodness, that is, in his own personal life, Eli failed miserably in his attitude toward his sons.

*And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil*

*dealings from all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make Jehovah's people to transgress.* From this we get the idea that the people generally reported the sinful practices of these sons to their father. In fact that is exactly what Eli himself said—"for I hear of your evil dealings from all this people." Not only did these priests commit personal sins; they also made others sin.

Eli sinned, not only from the standpoint of parental indulgence, but also in his judicial capacity as judge and high priest. When Moses was giving his farewell addresses to the people of Israel, he said this, "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, that will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and, though they chasten him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." (Deut. 21:18-21.)

If it is objected that these sons of Eli were no longer minors, but married men, and he therefore could not deal with them as Moses commanded; we must not forget that Eli was still the judge and high priest, and, as such, had the authority to compel obedience or inflict appropriate punishment upon them.

*If one man sin against another, God shall judge him; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall entreat for him?* Eli drew a contrast between sins of men against their fellow men, and sins of men against God. In the case of the first, properly constituted judges had been appointed to deal with them (cf. Deut. 17:8, 9); but when it comes to sins against Jehovah, who shall act as mediator? These wicked priests were not only sinning against their brethren, but chiefly against God; and since there was no excuse for it, there was no one who could entreat the Lord to have mercy upon them. This is exactly what Jehovah told Samuel

would happen. "And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever." (1 Sam. 3:14.)

*Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because Jehovah was minded to slay them.* This does not mean that Jehovah was minded to slay them, regardless of what they did; but rather that it was their own wilful and impenitent disobedience, which was the cause of their destruction. Adam Clarke notes that the Hebrew particle *ki*, which is translated because, should be rendered therefore; and if that had been done, the passage would read as follows: "Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, therefore Jehovah was minded to slay them." This, of course, is precisely what the context teaches regarding the question. The Bible nowhere intimates that God desires the death of any penitent person. (Cf. Ezek. 33: 10, 11; 2 Pet. 3: 9.) The truth is, Hophni and Phinehas had reached the point of no return in their sinful attitude and conduct; and the same thing may be true of any person today who follows their pernicious ways, regardless of what his particular sins may be. (Cf. Heb. 6: 6.)

### Tragedy Compounded

(1 Sam. 4: 12-18)

*And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.* The preceding verses of the chapter from which this section of the lesson is taken must be before us, in order to understand the verses now under consideration. Israel had gone out against the Philistines to battle, and were defeated with the loss of about four thousand men. The elders then decided to bring the ark of Jehovah to the battle field, in the hope that he would save them. That they did, and the two sons of Eli were there with the ark. This greatly affected the Philistines, and they drew themselves up for a mighty blow, with the result that thirty thousand men of Israel fell in battle, including Hophni and Phinehas, and the ark was taken by the Philistines. The battlefield could not have been very far from

Shiloh, for the messenger reached the city the same day with the tragic news. His conduct was the usual manner in which calamitous reports were made.

*And when he came, lo, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man hasted, and came and told Eli.* The aged priest, as a public magistrate, was accustomed to taking his seat daily in the spacious recess at the entrance of the gate of the city, and it would be but natural that such should be done when so much was at stake on the battlefield. It is obvious from the text that Eli's greatest concern was for the safety of the ark, and he was anxiously awaiting news of the issue of the battle. For some reason the messenger passed Eli up, and reported the tragedy to the people before he did to the priest and judge.

*Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set, so that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my son?* It is obvious from this statement of the physical condition of Eli that his "watching" (verse 13) was not with his eyes.

He was on his seat by the wayside, where he was easily accessible to the people, and was listening intently for any word from the conflict.

And he that brought the tidings answered and said, *Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.* It would be difficult to include more dreadful news in such a few words, as those spoken by the messenger; and it appears that each thing he said was worse than the one before it. (1) Israel fled before the enemy. That was bad; but (2) there was a great slaughter—thirty thousand dead; that was worse. (3) Then came the news of the death of his own sons; and, finely (4) the worst of all—the ark of God had been taken by the enemy.

*And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.* Eli bore all the terrifying news, which the messenger relayed to him, until he made mention of the ark of God. That was too much for the old man; he fell from his seat, broke his neck, and died. Read the remainder of the chapter. All of these things were in fulfilment of the words which Jehovah spoke to Samuel.

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What is the general picture of Eli as presented in the Scriptures?  
What message did Jehovah reveal to Samuel regarding him?  
What was the priestly family relationship of Eli?  
What is known regarding the final removal of his family from the priesthood?  
What was Eli's place as a judge in Israel?

### The Golden Text

For what is James noted as a writer?  
Upon what does he place the emphasis in the golden text?  
What relation is noted between the writing of James and the Sermon on the Mount?  
What does James teach regarding the question of self-deception?

### The Character of Eli's Sons

What is the significance of the expression "base men"?  
Give some examples of their immoral character.  
In what sense did they not know Jehovah?  
In what way did they disregard the sacrifices which the people offered?  
What is said regarding Samuel in the midst of their record and why?

### An Ineffectual Reproof

What did Eli hear regarding his sons and from whom?  
Who were the women mentioned in the text?  
What shows the abominable character of the conduct of Eli's sons?  
What did Eli do regarding the sins of his sons?  
How do you account for his attitude toward them?  
In what way did the sons of Eli cause others to sin?  
What had Moses commanded regarding disobedient children?

Why didn't Eli deal with his sons accordingly?  
 What contrast did EH draw between sins against men and sins against God?  
 Discuss this difference.  
 In what sense could no one entreat for one who sins against Jehovah?  
 How was this demonstrated in the case of Eli's sons?  
 How did the sons react to the reproof of their father?  
 Why was Jehovah minded to slay them?  
 What is Jehovah's general attitude toward sinful people?  
 Why can't some people be brought to repentance?

Tragedy Compounded  
 Give the setting of this section of our lesson.  
 Why did the messenger come to Shiloh with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head?  
 Where was Eli at the time, and why was he there?  
 What was his age at this time and his physical condition?  
 Why was he so concerned for the ark?  
 In what sense was he "watching"?  
 In what way did the messenger relay the news to Eli?  
 What effect did the report have upon him and why?

**Lesson XII—June 18, 1961**

**SAMUEL, JUDGE OF ISRAEL**

**Lesson Text**

**1 Sam. 7: 3-10, 15-17**

3 And Sam'-u-el spake unto all the house of Is'-ra-el, saying, If ye do return unto Je-ho'-vah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ash'-ta-roth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Je-ho'-vah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Phi-lis'-tines.

4 Then the children of Is'-ra-el did put away the Ba'-al-im and the Ash'-ta-roth, and served Je-ho'-vah only.

5 And Sam'-u-el said, Gather all Is'-ra-el to Miz'-pah, and I will pray for you unto Je-ho'-vah.

6 And they gathered together to Miz'-pah, and drew water, and poured it out before Je-ho'-vah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Je-ho'-vah. And Sam'-u-el judged the children of Is'-ra-el in Miz'-pah.

7 And when the Phi-lis'-tines heard that the children of Is'-ra-el were gathered together to Miz'-pah, the lords of the Phi-lis'-tines went up against Is'-ra-el. And when the children of Is'-ra-el heard it, they were afraid of the Phi-lis'-tines.

8 And the children of Is'-ra-el said to Sam'-u-el, Cease not to cry unto Je-ho'-vah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Phi-lis'-tines.

9 And Sam'-u-el took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Je-ho'-vah; and Sam'-u-el cried unto Je-ho'-vah for Is'-ra-el; and Je-ho'-vah answered him.

10 And as Sam'-u-el was offering up the burnt-offering, the Phi-lis'-tines drew near to battle against Is'-ra-el; but Je-ho'-vah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Phi-lis'-tines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Is'-ra-el.

15 And Sam'-u-el judged Is'-ra-el all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth'-el, and Gil'-gal, and Miz'-pah; and he judged Is'-ra-el in all those places.

17 And his return was to Ra'-mah, for there was his house; and there he judged Is'-ra-el: and he built there an altar unto Je-ho'-vah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 3: 1-21.

**Daily Bible Readings**

June 12. M.....	Appointment of Prophets (Ex. 3: 1-12)
June 13. T.....	The Prophet, God's Spokesman (Deut. 18: 15-22)
June 14. W.....	A Developing Prophet (1 Sam. 3: 15-21)
June 15. T.....	A Praying Prophet (1 Sam. 7: 3-12)
June 16. F.....	Jeremiah's Call (Jer. 4: 1-10)
June 17. S.....	Call to Reformation (1 Kings 17: 1-7)
June 18. S.....	Faithful Prophets (Heb. 11: 32-40)

TIME.—1120 B.C.

PLACE.—Mizpah.

PERSONS.—Samuel and the people of Israel.

### Introduction

It is significant that no one man ever fully typified Christ in any given situation. For example, it was necessary for Joshua to complete the work which Moses began with Israel, in bringing them from the bondage of Egypt to their home in Canaan; all of which foreshadowed the work of Jesus as the Saviour of the human race. And in like manner, there is no man in sacred history, other than Jesus, who was prophet, priest, and king. Samuel, as prophet, priest, and judge, appears to have been nearest to Jesus in this respect.

The life of Samuel touched the lives of so many other notable people that it is impossible to study his life and character independently of theirs. This is particularly true of Hannah, Eli, Saul, and David. Samuel was given to Jehovah by his consecrated mother at an early age, and he was brought up at the feet of Eli in the house of the Lord, during a time when the spiritual condition of Israel was at a very low ebb. Since soon

after the days of Joshua, Israel had been more or less under the direction of judges, of whom Samuel was the last. This implies, of course, that his was the time of transition—from judges to a king.

As was pointed out in the previous lesson, the affairs of Israel, under the well-meaning but weak Eli, had been allowed to drift into lamentable conditions. His sons who were serving as priests were extremely wicked, with the result that the center of worship became exceedingly corrupt. Israel therefore was ripe for the catastrophe which followed in the wake of the war with the Philistines. The ark of Jehovah which had been captured in battle, having been taken there in a vain attempt to save the rapidly deteriorating army of Israel, and was not returned for a period of twenty years. (See 1 Sam. 7: 2.) This gives some idea of the deplorable condition of Israel at the time of this lesson.

### The Golden Text

*"Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth."* These were the words which Eli instructed young Samuel to speak, if the voice he had been hearing came to him again. This text must be understood in the light of the conditions which have just been described. Samuel was ministering unto Jehovah before Eli, and the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision. Eli and Samuel had both gone to bed in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was. The lamp of God had not gone out, when Jehovah called to Samuel. The child thought that it was Eli's voice, and he went to him immediately to see what he might want.

The aged priest assured Samuel that he did not call him, and directed that he return to his bed. This was repeated twice, and then Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. He again directed that he return to his couch, with the admonition that if the voice came again to speak the words of the text. Jeho-

vah then spoke to Samuel the fourth time, and the child responded as he had been instructed. God then revealed to him the fate of Eli and his house. Samuel remained in bed until morning, and then arose and opened the doors of the house of Jehovah. He was afraid to show Eli the vision, but when the priest pressed him, he told him everything which Jehovah had revealed to him. Eli's response was, "It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good." (See 1 Sam. 3: 1-18.)

Samuel's willingness to hear the voice of Jehovah made it possible for the Lord to use him as one of his great prophets. Nothing is said about the number of prophets between Moses and Samuel, but, so far as the record goes, Samuel was the next prophet of distinction after the law-giver. He was, in fact, the first of a line of prophets which continued throughout the remainder of the Old Testament period. (Cf. Acts 3: 24.) "And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was

with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba

knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah. (1 Sam. 3: 19, 20.)

## The Text Explained

### Israel's Reformation

(1 Sam. 7: 3, 4)

*And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and, the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.* The last thing the record has regarding Samuel before this was his service in the tabernacle. We do not have his exact age when the Philistines captured the ark of Jehovah, but we do know that during the twenty-year period during which it was in their possession, nothing is said or known of Samuel.

The last thing that was said about him before the twenty-year period just referred to was, "And Jehovah appeared again in Shiloh; for Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel." (1 Sam. 3: 21-4: 1a.) As Samuel emerged from the years of silence, he appeared in the role of a prophet, priest, and judge. He told the people that if they wanted freedom from their enemies, they would have to put away their false gods, return to Jehovah, and serve him with all their hearts. The Baalim and the Ashtaroth are both plural terms, and included all their male and female deities, respectively. All true reformation must begin with a separation between idolatry, of whatever kind it is, and the true God.

*And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.* It can be seen from the map that Mizpah was some distance from the land of the Philistines, but as the Philistines had subjugated the Israelites, it is pos-

sible that they had garrisons in those parts of the land which were occupied by the people of the Lord.

One would gather from verses 10, 11 that the people of Israel were armed, yet it appears that the principal purpose of their coming together in Mizpah was religious. Samuel told them that he would pray for them there. The people then gave evidence of their sincerity by abstaining from food and drink, and by confessing their sins unto Jehovah. Thus a great national reformation was effected through the influence of Samuel. When people reach the point where their servitude to that which is opposed to Jehovah becomes a burden to them, it is not difficult to get them to listen to instruction which will lead them back to God; and when they have been correctly taught, they are ready to put into practice that which is required of them. In addition to his role of a prophet, Samuel also became the judge of Israel.

### Victory over the Philistines

(1 Sam. 7: 7-10)

*And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.* The Philistines no doubt rightly concluded that the gathering of Israel to Mizpah was for the purpose of raising the spirit of their religious patriotism, in preparation for throwing off their yoke of foreign domination; and they apparently intended to crush it then and there. But the Philistines did not take into consideration the fact that when Israel returned to Jehovah, he would also return to them. (Cf. 1 Sam. 6: 6.)

Intercessory prayer has always been looked upon with favor by Jehovah, especially when those involved are his people. One has only

to read the history of Samuel's life in order to see how often he took advantage of the privilege of prayer. The people frequently requested that he pray for them; and on one occasion he said, "Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in the good and the right way." (1 Sam. 12: 23.)

*And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him.* Some commentators assert that Samuel was no. a priest, but this passage, together with such others as 10: 8; 13: 8ff, certainly show that he did offer acceptable sacrifices.

*And as Samuel was offering the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel.* The sacrifice and prayers of Samuel were answered by such a tremendous storm of lightning and thunder that the Philistines became panic-stricken, and fled in disorder. The people of Israel, recognizing the hand of God, pursued after the enemy which they had dreaded so much, and administered to them such a defeat as to prevent a further attack. "And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car." (1 Sam 7: 11.)

Jehovah has demonstrated over and over again his willingness to accept the sacrifices and hear the prayers of his people, but how often do they neglect to offer them! So many of us are like the rebellious Israelites, we do not think seriously of the Lord until we are in need of his help in some particular instance. But that kind of attitude does not please him, and cannot result in the proper growth of the soul.

This is the second time in the lessons of this quarter that we have seen the Lord use the elements to aid his people against their enemies. The great storm by the waters of Megiddo resulted in the complete destruction of the forces of Sisera. The river was flooded and in the ensuing panic

the horses tramped many of the warriors to death. (See Judges 4, 5.) This is what is meant by the providential workings of God. He can take the laws of nature and use them to the advantage of his people.

The result of the disastrous defeat of the Philistines by Israel is told in these words: "Then Samuel took a stone and sat it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel; and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites." (1 Sam. 7: 12-14.)

### Samuel's Civil Administration

(1 Sam. 7: 12-15)

*And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.* Adam Clarke says, "Samuel is supposed to have lived one hundred years; he did not begin to judge Israel till he was about forty years of age; and if he was one hundred years of age when he died, he must have been a judge sixty years, and consequently filled that office during the whole of Saul's reign. But that he had been dead before Saul's last battle, is evident from the transactions of that king with the witch of Endor, and probably not long before. Samuel was the prophet of that time; declared the will of the Lord, and frequently directed both the civil and military transactions of the kingdom. Samuel seems, in many respects, to have been considered the governor of the people, while Saul was only looked upon as the general of the armies."

Samuel as has been pointed out frequently, was the last of the line of judges, and it appears to be certain that no other one in the list exercised the influence which Samuel did. The record plainly indicates that the people stood in greater awe of him than they did of the king, and even the king himself was rebuked by Samuel more than once. (See 1 Sam. 13: 11ff; 15: 10ff.) The

place and work of this great man of God have been admirably summed up by James Hastings as follows:

The period of Samuel was a critical period in the life of Israel because it was a time of transition. It was a period marked by change both in religion and in the affairs of state. The age of the judges was drawing to an end, and the demand for a king was making itself heard. Such times of transition, when old things are passing away and the new era has not fully come, are difficult and perilous times in the life of any nation. This is true because they carry with them something of the mystery and of the painfulness that belong to all processes of birth. Therefore, any leading personality who endeavors to sum up and guide such uncertain tendencies will almost certainly be involved in misunderstanding or neglect, or both.

This was true of Samuel, and he has been referred to as the first martyr of the order of the prophets. He stood between the past and the future, the living and the dead. Brought up in reverence for the days of old, he attempted to be the mediator, in a changeful epoch, between the old and the new; with the result that he found himself among those of whom it has been said that they are attacked from both sides—charged with not going far enough and with going too far, with saying too little and with saying too much. Men who belong to this class cannot be comprehended at a glance like Moses or Elijah or Isaiah, and therefore are thrust aside, and yet who are "the silent healers who bind up the wounds of their age in spite of itself," and who are "the reconcilers who turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and of the fathers of the children." The real power of such men lies in the fact that, while they are driven more or less to take active part in the affairs of their country, they are or may be—as Samuel was—men of deep religious feeling, who see him who is invisible

and try to shape their policies, amid the hard, intractable affairs of this world, in accordance with the will of God.

In the words of A. H. Strong, The darkest part of the night is just before the dawn. When the enemy comes in like a flood the Lord lifts up a standard against him. God never leaves himself without a witness. Somewhere, in the most godless times, can be found those who love and serve God. Elijah may fancy that he alone is left to stand for the truth among a nation of idolaters, but God shows him that he has yet seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal. And God makes this very Elijah the beginning of a second line of prophets, that holds on through Elisha and Ezekiel even to Malachi and John the Baptist. At the very time that the army of the king of Syria is stricken with blindness, supernatural vision is granted to Elisha's servant, and the young man's eyes are opened; he sees, and, behold! the mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire round about his master. So, in every dark day in the history of his people, God wakens some chosen servant of his to see what the common people are blind to.

*And he went from, year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel: and he built there an altar unto Jehovah.* It is possible that Samuel voluntarily set up these various places of judgment for the convenience of the people. There would, of course, be many problems and controversies which would need his attention, and the wise counselor and reverent judge could adjust the controversies and solve the problems of all who feared the Lord. Shiloh had probably been destroyed, and that accounts for his building the altar at his home in Ramah. (Cf. Deut. 12: 1-14.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

Why is it probably true that no man ever fully typified Christ?

What was Samuel's relation in this respect?

Show why it is difficult to consider the life of Samuel alone.

What was the general condition of Israel during the time of Samuel?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were these words spoken?  
 How was Samuel affected by the message which he received from the Lord?  
 What effect did the willingness of Samuel to hear God's word have on his entire life?

### Israel's Reformation

Under what circumstances did Samuel begin this great reformation?  
 What condition did he name? and why?  
 In what role did Samuel appear as he emerged from the period of silence?  
 Where does all true reformation begin?  
 Show how this applies to people today?  
 Why did Samuel want all the people to come together to Mizpah?  
 In what way did the people demonstrate their sincerity?  
 Why are overt acts of obedience required of people who seek to please the Lord?  
 Show how this principle is applicable to people today.  
 Why do many people not want to do that which God commands by way of obedience?

### Victory over the Philistines

What effect did the gathering of Israel in Mizpah have on the Philistines?  
 What did the Philistines fail to consider?  
 What effect should this principle have on people of this age?

How did Israel feel about the movements of their enemy?

Why did they want Samuel to pray for them instead of praying for themselves?

What does the Bible teach regarding intercessory prayer?

What place did prayer, and especially intercessory prayer, have in the life of Samuel?

What did Samuel do before he prayed?  
 Give reasons for thinking that Samuel was or was not a priest.

In what way did Jehovah answer the prayer which was offered?

Why has Jehovah demonstrated again and again regarding his willingness to accept the sacrifices and prayers of his people?

Why do so many people fail to call upon him in these respects?

Tell of another instance in which God used the elements in behalf of his people against their enemies.

What was the result of the disastrous defeat of the Philistines?

### Samuel's Civil Administration

How long did Samuel probably serve as judge of his people?

Discuss his influence in this capacity.  
 Why could he so effectively rebuke the king?

Why was the place of Samuel so critical?  
 How did he show his greatness during this time?

Where were his places of judgment?  
 Why build an altar in Ramah?

## Lesson XIII—June 25, 1961

# THE PEOPLE REJECT SAMUEL AS JUDGE

## Lesson Text

1 Sam. 8:1-9, 19-22

1 And it came to pass, when Sam'-u-el was old, that he made his sons judges over Is'-ra-el.

2 Now the name of his first-born was Jo'-el; and the name of his second, A-bi'-jah: they were judges in Be'-er-she'-ba.

3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice.

4 Then all the elders of Is'-ra-el gathered themselves together, and came to Sam'-u-el unto Ra'-mah;

5 And they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Sam'-u-el, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Sam'-u-el prayed unto Je'-ho'-vah.

7 And Je'-ho'-vah said unto Sam'-u-el, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee;

for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of E'-gypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

19 But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Sam'-u-el; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us,

20 That we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Sam'-u-el heard all the

words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of Je-ho'-vah.

22 And Je-ho'-vah said to Sam'-

u-el, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Sam-u-el said unto the men of Is'-ra-el, Go ye every man unto his city.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 8: 10-18.

**Daily Bible Readings**

June 19. M.....	Samuel As a boy (1 Sam. 1: 21-28)
June 20. T.....	Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2: 1-10)
June 21. W.....	The Call (1 Sam. 3: 1-10)
June 22. T.....	Samuel Anoints Saul (1 Sam. 9: 25-10: 1)
June 23. F.....	Samuel a Faithful Man (1 Sam. 12: 1-5)
June 24. S.....	The People Reject God (1 Sam. 12: 1-6, 25)
June 25. S.....	Jehovah the True Judge (Psalm 26: 1-7)

TIME.—1102 B.C.

PLACE.—Ramah.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Samuel, his sons, and the elders of Israel.

**Introduction**

It was pointed out in the last lesson that Samuel lived in a period of transition. The thinking of the people was undergoing a change, and whatever happened in the way of outward circumstances, the reaction of the people to it was basically the result of their thinking. This is plainly illustrated by what happened after Samuel appointed his sons judges. If the people, that is, their leaders, had never thought of a king, and had not dwelt on the idea until the concept was firmly fixed in their minds, they would not have asked for a king. Instead, they would have called for more suitable judges.

This is a lesson which needs to be emphasized today; for the principle involved is just as applicable now as it was in the days of Samuel. When people entertain ideas on any subject for any length of time, the result will eventually be seen in their outward action. It is always true that "as he thinketh within himself, so is he." (See Prov. 23: 7a.) And if the thinking of the people is away from God's order, the outcome is certain to be a departure from his will. "For my thoughts are not your

thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55: 8, 9.)

The firm conviction had grown up among the people of Israel, and especially among their leaders, that if they were to succeed with their national affairs, they would have to have a more closely knit national organization. In short, they would have to cease to emphasize their local tribes, and concentrate on a consolidated leadership. Or, to state the same thing in other words, they would have to become a military nation, and to accomplish that they, like the nations about them, would have to have a monarchy. This principle, again, is just as true now as it was then. One has only to look at the manner in which many brethren are conducting their work, in order to see the application. The word of God is all we need to guide us (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17); it is not necessary to imitate the "nations" about us.

**The Golden Text**

*"I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath."* One of the reasons the elders of Israel gave for wanting a king was that he might "go out before us, and fight our battles," or, to state the same thing in other

words, that he might save them. They were therefore putting their confidence in a human king, rather than in the eternal Jehovah. Not only did the people reject God in calling for a king in the days of Samuel, ten of the tribes later rejected the house

of David which Jehovah had set over them. "And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." (1 Kings 12:16.)

It is an inexorable law of Jehovah that people will reap that which they sow. (See Gal. 6: 7, 8.) The wise man had long ago said, "He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity" (Prov. 22:8a), and so the time came in the experience of Israel when the inevitable overtook them. They sowed the wind, and their harvest was the whirlwind (Hos. 8: 7); their rejection of Jehovah made their destruction certain. "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help. Where now is thy king, that he may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath." (Hos. 13: 9-11.)

Jehovah's question, "Where now

is thy king, that he may save thee in all thy cities?" is most significant. They had expected the impossible from their king—the impossible; because God alone can save. But when people are determined to have their own way, God permits it; but he has made it plain that they must suffer the consequences. "Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet: I Jehovah will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols." (Ezek. 14: 1-5; cf. 2 Thess. 2: 8-12.)

### The Text Explained

#### The Occasion of the Request for a King

(1 Sam. 8: 1-3)

*And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his first-born was Joel: and the name of his second, Abijah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice.* It is generally thought that Samuel was about sixty years old at this time. He had probably served as judge himself for some twenty years. There is nothing said about his physical disability, other than the fact that he was old. The infirmities which go with old age probably rendered Samuel unfit for the demands which his "circuit judgeship" made upon him; and caused him to feel that he should have some judicial assistance.

There is no reason to conclude that Samuel relinquished his position as the judge of Israel when his sons were made judges. He probably, judging from future references in the narrative concerning him, did most

of his work at his home in Ramah. These sons had probably been carefully trained for the duties which he assigned to them by their father; for there is no indication that he over-indulged them, as Eli apparently did his sons. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that their appointment was a kind of delegated arrangement, simply that of helping their father bear the great burdens which were upon him. (Cf. Ex. 18: 13-27.)

The location which was assigned to the sons of Samuel was Beer-sheba; and if one will consult the map, he will see that they were some distance from the home of their father. It sometimes happens that an otherwise good person, when brought under certain circumstances, will yield to temptations and do things which he would not have done, had he been characterized by different association. At any rate, the fact remains that these sons did not walk in the steps of their father. They were guilty of three gross sins, namely, (1) turning aside after lucre; (2) taking bribes; and (3) perverting justice. These were grave of-

fenses, and were very closely related to each other. Their love and desire for money led them to take bribes and pervert justice; or, to state the same things in another way, their love and desire for money led them to give to the man who had the means to pay for it what he wanted; so that the wicked rich were favored above the righteous poor. How often have men who have been placed in responsible positions, and who were thought to have been good men, acted on the same principle in our day!

People who read these Old Testament records may wonder why Samuel was not punished for the sins of his sons, as Eli was for the misconduct of his sons. This was probably due to several factors. In the first place, the sins of Samuel's sons appear to have been far less heinous in their character than the unblushing and daring profanity of Eli's sons; and it is altogether possible that Samuel, due to the distance between him and his sons, did not know of their evil conduct. The record plainly says that Eli knew what his sons were doing, and that he did not restrain them. And, too, it is fair to assume from that which is said further on about the righteous character of Samuel himself that he would not tolerate the sinful practices of his sons, when once they were brought to his attention. (Cf. 1 Sam. 12:1-5.)

### Implications Contained in the Request

(1 Sam. 8: 4-9)

*Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah; and they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.* Zerr notes that there could not have been any criticism due the people had they only protested against the evil conduct of the sons of Samuel, and demanded some relief; but they used the occasion to express a desire which was already in their hearts, and which was completely independent of the corruptions of these under-judges. The request which they made to Samuel revealed their true motive in these words, "like all the nations." They had been looking at the nations instead of God.

Furthermore, there is no indication that the nations about Israel had changed their form of government, because of the corruption of some former officials. The Israelites were not primarily concerned with the desire for righteous judges; they simply wanted to imitate that which they admired in others, and seized upon a situation brought about by the wickedness of the sons of Samuel as the occasion for asking for it. The desire to keep up with the world has often been the downfall of God's people.

*But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto Jehovah.* There was nothing about the proposal which the elders made that pleased Samuel. It certainly did not please him personally; no man who is trying to do right enjoys having his role called in question; and it is painful to be bluntly told that one's children are gross sinners. However, a man like Samuel could do something about the latter; and it is altogether probable that he did, as may be inferred from 1 Sam. 12: 2. If Samuel did not actually remove his sons from office, he at least informed the people that they were there and could be dealt with appropriately. It is well to note that no further charge was made concerning the sons.

While personal and family considerations no doubt affected Samuel's views regarding the request for a king, his principal dissatisfaction very likely arose from the revolutionary character of the proposed change—a change which amounted to a formal renunciation of the Divine government. It is possible that the people did not deliberately intend to reject God as their ultimate Leader, yet their action in requesting a visible monarch did, in effect, relegate their unseen King to an obscure position; and that, in God's sight, was equivalent to rejecting him outright. Jehovah will never accept second place in any one's devotions.

But whatever may have been Samuel's reasons for being displeased with the request which the elders made of him, he took the matter to God in prayer before committing himself regarding the question, one way or another. This was a matter which involved the will of God; and Samuel had too much faith in and re-

spect for Jehovah to permit himself to act before ascertaining his will. This attitude on the part of Samuel made the way easier for him; for he knew that Jehovah approved of that which he did. This should be a valuable lesson to all of us. Paul says, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

And Jehovah said unto Samuel, *Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them.* When people reject the leaders whom the Lord ordains, they are, in effect, rejecting him; and this is a truth which should be emphasized again and again. Jehovah, in the case now before us, took notice of the indignity which Samuel was being subjected to and encouraged him by telling him that it was, in reality, he who was being put to shame. This should certainly encourage us to bear with patience any shameful practices or indignities which are thrust upon us. Our main consideration should be to see that we are ourselves doing the best we can to please the Lord. (Cf. Psalm 69: 6-9.)

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. This additional statement was apparently made for the encouragement of Samuel, and in it Jehovah reminds him that the rebellious attitude on the part of Israel was nothing new. If Jehovah were not a merciful God, Israel would have been destroyed long before they asked for a king.

Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. It has already been pointed out in this lesson that God will often allow people to have their own way, when they are determined upon a course of action; but we must not overlook the fact that he does not take advantage of their

ignorance regarding what the future has in store for them: he graciously warns them what to expect. This principle is just as true now, as it was then; for no one can read the Bible, without being informed regarding the end of any course of action. (1 Sam. 8: 10-18 was God's warning to Israel.)

### The Warning Rejected and the Demand Granted

(1 Sam. 8: 19-22)

*But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.* The solemn warnings of Samuel had no effect on the people, so far as changing their attitude was concerned. They were adamant; and once their real desire was made known, they felt no further need to bolster their arguments by references to the age of Samuel and the wickedness of his sons. They wanted a king, in order to be like the nations about them; and what they said to introduce the petition was only meant for an occasion to get the question before Samuel.

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of Jehovah. And Jehovah said to Samuel, *Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.* And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, *Go ye every man unto his city.* The aged prophet and judge listened patiently to all the people had to say, and then went to God in prayer for further guidance. God's answer was for him to grant their request, and that Samuel himself was to become the king-maker. Some one has observed that one of the most magnanimous, majestic, and heroic deeds ever done in this world's history was done by Samuel. When once he was convinced that it was the will of God for his people to have a different form of government, he set himself to do that which no other man could do, namely, forsake all the past, abandon all the lines of action on which he had worked through the best years of his life, and then put into other mens hands the future of his people. All of this meant the condemnation of what he had struggled to accomplish.

But nowhere in the life of Samuel is his greatness seen better than in his efforts to put into effect God's will regarding his rebellious people. Walpole has noted that perhaps there is no finer test of obedience than in a recognition of authority when it is contrary to our judgment. It may be that we are told by authority to take a certain action or to give up a certain practice which concerns others as well as ourselves. Obedience will mean a public slight, a humiliation. It is not merely giving up our own will, but humbling ourselves though we feel sure that we are right. The enemy will laugh us to scorn, and we shall be called

"turncoats" or cravens; and, just as in proportion to the strength of our personality, we shall feel the pain of obedience. But it is then that our obedience will be worth something; for the obedient is not the spiritless, unintelligent drone that always does what he is told, because it is least trouble, because it is easier to obey than not to; but the man who really obeys is the one who, having a mind and will in opposition to the voice of authority, gladly puts them aside when once he has understood the will of authority.

The ones using these lessons will be richly rewarded by reading the remainder of the life of Samuel.

**Questions for Discussion**

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

**Introduction**

What peculiar condition characterized the time of Samuel?  
Why was this true?  
Why is this lesson so important to us now?  
Why does "thinking" have such an important bearing on conduct?  
What is the basic reason for changes on the part of the Lord's people?

**The Golden Text**

What was one of the principal reasons the people of Israel had for asking for a king?  
What further rejection was made in God's order?  
What law do we see operating in this lesson?  
How does the golden text illustrate the lesson for today?  
Under what conditions does God allow people to have their own way?  
What effect should this have on us?

**The Occasion of the Request for a King**

How did the elders of Israel bring up the question of wanting a king?  
In what sense did Samuel make his sons judges?  
Where did they perform their duties?  
What is said regarding their character and conduct?  
How account for Samuel's appointing that kind of judges?  
Why wasn't he condemned for the unfaithfulness of his sons, as Eli was?

Implications Contained in the Request  
In what way did the elders reveal their real motive?  
If they really wanted relief from corruption, why didn't they say so?  
In what sense did they want to be like the nations about them?  
How may this principle be applied to people today?  
How did Samuel react to the request for a king?  
What was it that displeased him?  
What did Samuel probably do regarding his sons? Give reasons for your answer.  
What did Samuel do before taking a stand on the request for a king?  
What lesson is there in this for us?  
How did Jehovah answer Samuel?  
What further encouragement did he give him?  
If God was willing to give the people a king, why protest to them solemnly regarding his character?

**The Warning Rejected and the Demand Granted**

Why did the people refuse to heed the warning voiced by Samuel?  
What does this show regarding human nature?  
After listening to the people, what did Samuel do before acting?  
What duty did Jehovah assign to Samuel in regard to these matters?  
What adjustment did this special assignment require Samuel to make?  
In what way does all of this show his greatness?  
In what does genuine obedience consist?  
How much of the life of Samuel have you read?



# THIRD QUARTER

## VITAL THEMES OF THE SCRIPTURES

AIM.—*To consider anew the great lessons of scripture, concerning Providence, Redemption, and Eternal Salvation, so that we may more nearly conform to the will of our Father in heaven.*

### Lesson I—July 2, 1961

## THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

#### Lesson Text Matt. 6: 24-34

24 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.

25 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?

26 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?

27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?

28 And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 Yet I say unto you, that even Sol'-o-mon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 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?

31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 For after all these things do the Gen'-tiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him."* (Psalm 103: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Job 38.

#### Daily Bible Readings

June 26. M.....	A Thoughtful Father (Matt. 6: 24-34)
June 27. T.....	A Merciful Father (Psalm 103: 1-10)
June 28. W.....	A Faithful Father (1 Pet. 4: 12-19)
June 29. T.....	A Chastening Father (Heb. 12: 5-11)
June 30. F.....	A Loving Father (John 3: 16-21)
July 1. S.....	A Forgiving Father (Luke 11: 1-10)
July 2. S.....	A Blessed Father (Eph. 1: 1-23)

TIME.—During the Galilean ministry, probably in A.D. 27, or shortly thereafter.

PLACE.—Possibly Mount Hattin, or some mountain in that vicinity.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

#### Introduction

The subject of God's providence is treated, in one way or another, throughout the entire Bible. The term "providence" literally means to see for, and sets forth God's watch-care over and plans for his people.

The inspired records of Joseph and Esther illustrate this doctrine of perfection. In addressing his son, Solomon said, "Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." (Prov. 3: 5, 6.) The writer of *Hebrews* made use of some Old Testament scriptures when he wrote, "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say,

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:

What shall man do unto me?" (Heb. 13: 5, 6.)

The Christian life is essentially one of faith. "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.) Not only must we believe that God does exist; we must also have confidence in him. And so we read, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

Any one who attempts to act independently of God does not trust him or have confidence in him. (Cf. James 4: 13-17.)

Any one who can truly say, "My times are in thy hand" (Psalm 31: 15; cf. Job 14: 5), realizes that providence embraces every aspect of his life. "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; cf. verses 35-39.) Genuine faith is always willing to accept the testimony of the Scriptures, not because of any ability to fathom the depths of their philosophy; but because the Lord has spoken. Faith which falters where philosophy fails and reason rebels is not the faith which honors God, and saves the soul. In the words of Whittier,

I know not where his islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond his love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,  
If hopes like these betray,  
Pray for me that my feet may  
gain  
The sure and safer way.

And thou, O Lord! by whom are  
seen  
Thy creatures as they be,  
Forgive me if too close I lean  
My human heart on thee!

### The Golden Text

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him." The psalm from which this text is taken is ascribed to David, the sweet singer of Israel; and the word "father" had a meaning for him which it did not have when it was first spoken in the morning of the world. In David's experience God was a pitiful, loving, and sin-forgiving Father; and as he looked back in his own life, and counted up the blessings he had received—forgiveness, comfort, renewal, and uplifting—he was swayed by the spirit of praise, adoration, and love; and out of his own growing affection there came this thought of God, which is our golden text for today.

The Fatherhood of God is referred to in various Old Testament passages, but it remained for Jesus to

give its true significance. As life has deepened, so has the word father, and especially as it is applied to God. As the human heart became more tender, that term became a repository of a profound and unutterable tenderness. Some one has observed that ages of sorrowful and sweet experience have emptied into it, filling it with the noblest treasures of human thoughts and human dreams. This human pilgrimage has truly been a long Emmaus walk, and many have been the hearts which burned on the way. Life viewed in this way is a continuous revelation, and, if we read it aright, it is a perpetual disclosure of the Fatherhood of God; for, as man is at his best as a father, so also is the Almighty.

There are many people who have

no difficulty in believing in God as the Creator, but who find it hard to believe in his loving care, because of so many disastrous conditions, such as storms, famines, earthquakes, etc. They are wont to ask, "How can one talk of God's loving care in the face of these facts?" But they forget that character must be achieved, rather than created. It was necessary

for the father to allow the prodigal son to wander into the far-off country, where he knew that riotous living would lead to the hog-pen, in order that he might discover a Love that would not let him be happy in exile. The hardships of life, if considered aright, will enhance our appreciation of God's concern for his people. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13.)

## The Text Explained

### A Truth Which Must Be Recognized

(Matt. 6: 24)

*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.* There are certain basic truths which every one who would be acceptable to God must learn; and one of the first of these truths is that Jehovah will not tolerate any rival for his affections. Any one who is acceptable to God must love him, and him only. This was the first lesson which those who received the Decalogue had to learn. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Ex. 20: 3.) The history of Israel from the time they received the law, until the Babylonian captivity, was a living demonstration of the will of God as expressed in the first commandment. (Cf. Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 11; 1 John 5: 21.)

Jesus, in the part of the passage now under consideration, assumes that man was created to serve (cf. Gen. 2: 15), and that he must therefore have a master; and since man was endowed with freedom of will, he has the power of choice. "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. 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." (Josh. 24: 14, 15.)

It should be plain to any thoughtful person, even if Jesus had not made the matter clear, that no one can serve two different masters at the same time, that is, masters with conflicting interests. But even so,

brethren in all ages of the church have been slow to learn this lesson; and it is for this reason that many endeavor to follow the ways of the world, while professing to be loyal to Jesus. But the god of this world had nothing in Jesus (John 14: 30), and that will be true of his followers, if they walk in his steps. This is where the distinction is drawn between Christianity and worldliness. *No man can serve two masters.*

*Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* When Jesus said that no man can serve two masters, he was speaking in general terms, that is, of any two masters; but in this part of the passage the question is made specific. God, of course, is a person, and "mammon" is personified as the god of riches, one of the most sought-after deities of the world. There is not any kind of evil, according to Paul, which men will not commit in their efforts to gain the favor of the god of mammon. (Cf. 1 Tim. 6: 10.) Mammon is essentially selfish, while God is munificent; and it is for that reason that the interest of the two can never be brought together. (Cf. Luke 16: 1-13.)

### God Can Be Trusted with Complete Confidence

(Matt. 6: 25-32)

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?* That which is said in this section of our lesson must be understood in the light of that which was said in the one which we have just considered. That is why it is so important to learn that no one can serve two masters. When once that question has been settled, then we are in position to learn what it means to trust in

God. It was God who created man's body, and gave him his life and they are certainly greater than that which is necessary to sustain them. It is reasonable therefore to conclude that if God created the body and gave the life, that he will also see to it that the needs of both are met. This is the first reason which Jesus assigns for his people's not worrying or being overly-anxious about these "second-ary" matters.

The Lord not only gives his solemn word that the needs of his people, such as food, drink, and clothing, will be provided; but he goes a step further and shows God's superiority over mammon. Mammon can supply only food, drink, and clothing, but God, in addition to that, created the body and gave the life. And Jesus also shows that his people can also have peace of mind, if they trust in God; but if doublemindedness becomes the rule of their lives, they can only fall to worrying and will be continually plagued by doubts; and they may learn to their sorrow that mammon cannot always be depended on to fulfill its claims and promises. Man's existence is far superior to all the secular blessings which he may require; and God as the heavenly Father will never forget this, or fail to act accordingly. Someone has said that man is more precious in God's sight than the productions of all lands, or the wardrobes of all kings.

*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?* The force of this illustration can be seen only when we consider the contrast between birds and people. The birds don't worry, but people do; and the birds are only creatures of God, while the people in question are his redeemed children. It is therefore unthinkable that God will supply the needs of the lesser, while remaining indifferent to those of his own possession. (Cf. Matt. 7: 9-11; Phil. 4: 19.)

*And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?* If any one thinks that anxiety can help him in getting that which he wants, then let him try to increase the measure of his life,

either by raising his height or extending the length of his days. Instead of finding that kind of help, many people have discovered the ill-effects of auto-intoxication which comes from unnecessary worrying. (Cf. Luke 12: 13-21.) It is God, and not mammon, who gives the real blessings of 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?* The lilies and the grass of the field do not serve mammon in any way, but they do function according to God's purpose in creating them; and the Lord's argument is that if we do that for which we have been ordained, God will supply our needs, just as he does for them.

*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.* It is impossible to read the section of the lesson now under consideration, without coming to the conclusion that Jesus was encouraging his disciples to believe that God will see to it that their needs are met. But we must not overlook the fact that Jesus also calls for a sense of proportion in living, that is, he expects us to learn to put first things first. This requires a constant process of revaluation of activities and possessions in the light of the highest ideal; and when this is done, the faithful child of God can, with confidence, banish doubt and doublemindedness from his life. The two types of life which Jesus refers to are in sharp contrast. The aim of the one is material gain, while the goal of the other is spiritual enrichment.

### **But There Is Human Responsibility**

(Matt. 6: 33, 34)

*But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* When peo-

ple are willing to make the proper adjustments in their lives, and actually put into practice that which they are told to do, God will always do his part. George Bernard Shaw is reported to have said, "Ask any man would he like to be a better man; and he will say yes, most piously. Ask him would he like to have a million of money; and he will say yes, most sincerely. But the pious citizen who would like to be a better man goes on behaving just as he did before. And the tramp who would like the million does not take the trouble to earn ten shillings." (Cf. Matt. 23: 1-3.)

The quest for the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, requires detachment, as well as concentration. Practically every responsible person is deeply influenced by the material surroundings and the life of the society into which his life has been cast. But he must not become so involved in the existing material order that all is lost if it is destroyed. He must have moral and spiritual values which will survive social change and economic ruin. This is what Jesus urges his people to do, and if they seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, they will have that which is both indestructible and eternal; and if all which is worldly is destroyed, they will still have that which cannot be taken from them. (Cf. Luke 12: 15.) The addition of these material blessings is not the result of miracles; they come as a result of our giving attention to the true laws of our being. Someone

has said, "Let religion be the first thing in our affections and in our labors, and Providence will be our mighty partner and helper in business." (Cf. Psalm 37: 25.)

*Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* Jesus, in this verse, makes a final plea for his disciples to put their supreme trust in God. He was speaking, for the most part, to people who depended upon their daily work for their food and raiment; and who faced the possibility of unemployment. If the people to whom Jesus spoke could be taught to put their trust in God, they, and all others who learn the lesson would and will see the folly of borrowing trouble for the future. Only God knows about the future; and he is amply able to take care of any situation which may arise. Charles Kingsley expressed the matter in these words: "Do today's duty, fight today's temptation, and do not weaken and distract yourself by looking forward to things which you cannot see and could not understand if you saw them."

As in everything else, it requires practice for one to learn to trust in God. Paul correctly expressed the idea when he said that he had learned the secret. (See Phil. 4: 10-13.) There is a secret to be learned; and let us remember that God never disappoints those who put their trust in him, and who are doing the best they can to live according to his will.

### Questions for Discussion

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

Why do some people find it difficult to believe in the goodness of God?  
Why does he permit evil in the world today?

#### Introduction

What is the meaning of the word "providence"?  
Give some idea of the extent of the teaching of the Bible on the question of the providence of God.  
How does this fit in with the essential life of a Christian?  
How much of the life of a child of God does providence cover? Give reasons for your answer.

#### A Truth Which Must Be Recognized

What is this truth which must be recognized?  
Why is it so important?  
How does the history of Israel illustrate this lesson?  
Why is man put to the necessity of choosing a master?  
Why can't one serve two masters?  
Why are so many slow in learning this lesson?  
What did Jesus mean by saying that the god of this world had nothing in him?  
What lesson should this have for us?  
Who or what is mammon?  
Why can't one serve God and mammon?

#### The Golden Text

Tell something of the writer and background of the psalm from which this text is taken.  
Discuss the appropriateness of the term "father" as applied to God.

**God Can Be Trusted with Complete Confidence**

What is the relation between this and the previous section of the lesson?  
 Why shouldn't people be anxious about the necessities of life?  
 In what way is God superior to mammon?  
 Why is God so interested in man's welfare?  
 What is the lesson of the illustration regarding the birds?  
 What great lesson do we learn from them?  
 In what other way does Jesus show the folly of anxiety?  
 What usually happens to people who worry?  
 Discuss the illustration regarding the lilies and the grass.  
 What makes God interested in them?  
 What is the significance of the term "therefore" in verse 31?

Are the blessings of life promised unconditionally? Give reasons for your answer.  
 What two types of life did Jesus refer to in verses 31, 32?

**But There Is Human Responsibility**

What adjustment in life does verse 33 require?  
 How does the average person react to this injunction?  
 In what sense is "detachment" required in seeking for the kingdom?  
 How must the true child of God regard his material surroundings?  
 In what sense are the necessities of life added to one?  
 In what way did Jesus climax his lesson on trust in God?  
 How must this lesson be learned?

**Lesson II—July 9, 1961**

**THE GIFT OF GOD'S LOVE**

**Lesson Text**

**John 3: 14-16; Rom. 5: 6-10; 8: 31, 32**

14 And as Mo'-ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

6 For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his own

love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.

10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life;

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

32 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?

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING—John 1: 35-51.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- July 3. M.....Christ, the Friend of Sinners (Luke 19: 1-10)
- July 4. T.....The Suffering Christ (Isa. 53: 1-9)
- July 5. W.....The Christ Who Justifies (Rom. 5: 6-10)
- July 6. T.....Love of God in Christ (Rom. 8: 31-39)
- July 7. F.....Christ and Sinners (Luke 15: 1-7)
- July 8. S.....The Exalted Christ (Eph. 1: 19-23)
- July 9. S.....Effects of Christ's Death (2 Cor. 5: 11-19)

TIME.—Jesus spoke the words in John in A.D. 27; Paul wrote Romans in A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Nicodemus, Paul and the Roman Christians.

## Introduction

The love of God is a subject which never grows old. And when people think of the love of God, their minds inevitably turn to the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John. Taking all Bible readers into consideration, this is perhaps the favorite text found in the Scriptures. Practically every person learned it in his childhood, and he has discovered that its meaning for him has grown deeper as his life and experience advanced. This verse has been called the Golden Text of the Bible, because that in it the entire purpose for which the Word was given is summed up. This passage is also sometimes referred to as the Divine Triangle, because of the three great and related truths which it reveals, namely, the depth of God's love, the greatness of his gift, and the blessings which he freely offers to the peoples of the earth.

Someone has observed that it is no accident which has given to this statement its unique place in the mind and heart of believers. The deepest thinker sees in the passage a summing up of the gospel, while the humblest believer feels that it expresses the whole substance of his faith. The inspired writer gathers himself up, as it were, to a supreme effort, and presents in one majestic, sweeping, comprehensive sentence the essence of Christian belief. And that declaration still stands in all

of its simple grandeur, in all its boundless love and mighty power. Centuries have passed, but they have wrought no change in it; time has failed to impair its freshness; with the result that it is the same today as it was yesterday, and there is every reason for believing that it always will be. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 13.)

The passing of the years has thrown no new light upon the meaning of this matchless expression of God's love for the human race. The wisdom and learning of men, the meditations of the holiest and best, have not added one jot to our comprehension of its mystery. Age upon age of opposition, of scorn, and of derision have utterly failed in shaking its power. People today who accept it in its fulness, find it as much the source of joy and strength, as did those men, women, and children who gladly gave their lives in its defense. Those who reject it have nothing which they can offer in its place to support the weak and encourage the desperate. It is still the most effective balm for broken hearts, and the surest stay of the dying. It is, as it always has been since the words were first written, the silver clarion whose peal rises high and clear above the din of strife, as it calls upon weary soldiers of Christ to renew their struggle with evil, whether within their own hearts or in the world.

## The Golden Text

*"And thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."* In every home the naming of a little child is an event of deep and peculiar interest. It is the first acknowledgment that a new personality has begun to live; and it is there that prayers and hopes for the future have their basis. But in the homes of pious Jews such an occurrence was more impressive still, especially in Bible times; for the names which they bestowed usually had peculiar meanings. The name which was given was meant to tell something about the person, either some memorial fact connected with his birth, or some purpose which it was hoped he would accomplish in the future. (Cf. Moses and John the Baptist—Ex. 2: 10; Luke 1: 13-17.)

The naming of Jesus was not left to human judgment or desires; he was named by the angel who appeared to Joseph. The name means "Salvation of Jehovah," or "Jehovah is the Saviour." Jesus in the Greek means the same as Joshua in the Hebrew. (Cf. Acts 7: 45; Heb. 4: 8.) There were other people who bore the name Jesus (cf. Col. 4: 11), but no one else wore the name by divine authority. This "Jesus" is the son whom God gave because of his great love for the world; and since he was sent to accomplish a specific purpose, it was the Father's will that he have a name which would accord with that purpose.

When the angel instructed Joseph regarding the name of the child which his wife would bear, he also

told him why the name should be given—"for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." This is the first promise of the New Testament. He was not to be simply a great leader, as Joshua was; but a Saviour in the final and highest meaning of that term. Salvation from

sin is full and complete—salvation from the love, practice, guilt, power, and punishment of sin. This is the salvation which Jesus is able to offer, but it is also a salvation which the sinner must be willing to accept; for the Lord saves no one against his will.

### The Text Explained

#### God's Unspeakable Gift

(John 3: 14-16)

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.* In citing the incident of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, Jesus indicated the prophetic and typical character of the Old Testament; and the wide extent to which he indorsed that part of God's revelation to man may be seen by the many occasions where he revealed himself under the same symbolism which the Old Testament used to reveal him. (Cf. Matt. 12: 40; Rom. 8: 3; 2 Cor. 5: 21.)

The account of the raising up of the brazen serpent is found in Num. 21: 4-9, which should be read before considering the application which Jesus made of the incident. The Lord was in conversation with Nicodemus; and in order to illustrate the purpose and efficacy of his coming into the world, he called attention to that which Moses did to make possible a cure for those who had been bitten by fiery serpents which Jehovah had sent among the multitude because of their rebellious attitude toward him.

The bite of the fiery serpents was fatal to many of the Israelites, but when the people came to Moses, confessed their sins, and asked him to pray for them, he did; and Jehovah responded by instructing Moses to make a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard, with the promise that any person who had been bitten would live when he looked upon the one which Moses had made. "And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked upon the serpent of brass, he lived."

That which Moses did was a real historical incident, and Jesus, as already pointed out, used it to illustrate his own mission into the world.

Some of the principal points of comparison between what was done in the two instances are, (1) In both cases (in the days of Moses and in the days of Christ) the people were in danger of death as the result of their sins. (2) In both cases it was God, out of the abundance of his grace, who provided the remedy. (3) In both cases the remedy had to be lifted up, so that all who were in danger might see it. And (4), in both cases it was necessary for every one who was saved from death to look upon the means which God had provided for the promised cure. It is hardly necessary, of course, to call attention to the fact that the case of the first had to do with the physical, while the second is concerned with the spiritual. (Cf. John 8: 28; 12: 32, 34.)

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.* The Fourfold Gospel, after saying that Luther referred to this verse as "the Bible in miniature," outlines its contents as follows: (1) The magnitude of God's love—his only begotten Son; (2) the reach of God's love—the sinful world; (3) the impartiality of God's love—whosoever will; (4) the beneficial richness of God's love—eternal life; and (5) the limitations of God's love—he nowhere promises to save unbelievers. The Speaker's Bible outlines the verse in this way:

(1) The fact of God's love—God so love the world; (2) the proof of God's love—God so loved the world that he gave; (3) the gift of God's love—he gave his only begotten Son; (4) the goal of God's love—that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. This is enough to show that the contents of this verse are practically inexhaustible.

In considering the issue of belief in the Son of God, namely, eternal

life, we should endeavor to give the term its highest meaning. Too many people think only of the *length*, while it appears that the important aspect is that of *quality*. It follows therefore that whatever hope of the future we may have depends upon our having in our life 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. 2 Cor. 4: 16.) It is for this reason that the Lord calls us to a quality of living which is eternal here and now.

The term "believe" is used in the New Testament in two senses, namely, (1) as an act of the mind on the part of an individual in response to testimony which has come to his attention; and (2) in a comprehensive sense, involving all that he does by way of obedience to that which he believes he is commanded to do. It is in this second sense that the word of the verse now under consideration is used, as may be seen from the last verse of the chapter: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (Cf. James 2: 14-26.)

### What the Giving of Christ Meant

(Rom. 5: 6-10)

*For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly.* In the preceding section of our lesson we learned that eternal life is promised to every one who believes in Jesus. This, as was pointed out, is a general or comprehensive statement. The particular method by which the believer comes into possession of this wonderful blessing is discussed in other parts of the New Testament, of which the Book of Romans is an example. The entire fourth chapter is taken up with a discussion of the method by which men are justified by faith, and the first five verses of chapter six tell something of the blessedness of those who are thereby justified, all of which should be read.

John 3: 16 does not tell us that Christ actually died for our sins, but Paul's statement in this section of the lesson does give us that information. In the preceding verses he tells us

something of what happens when people are justified by faith, but he wants us to know that all of this comes as a result of the willingness of Christ to die for us while we were in a helpless and hopeless condition. Before the death of Christ, all men were condemned sinners; but when Christ died the way of escape was opened up. All of this was the result of the love of God for the lost, and the plan for his salvation was perfected without man's having anything whatsoever to do with it. "But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3: 4, 5.) All of this was done in due season, or at the proper time. (Cf. Gal. 4: 4, 5.) Thus, in verse 6 of our text, the inspired writer gives an exhibition of the greatness of Divine love which died, not merely for the helpless who were likely to perish, but also for the guilty who deserved to die. This is the very substance of the gospel—the love of God for sinners.

*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die.* The purpose of this verse seems to be to set in contrast the love of God with the love of men. In dealing with the latter, Paul points out the possible height to which man's love for man will go. The righteous man simply does that which he ought to do, that is, he gives to every man his due, but only that. The good man, on the other hand, not only does that which he ought to do, according to the standard of righteousness; but he goes further and does all he can and proves his moral quality by promoting the well-being of him with whom he has to do. And so, according to Paul, one would hardly die for the merely upright or strictly just man who commands our respect; but he might possibly die for the noble, beneficent men who calls out our affection. (See Vincent, *in loco*.)

*But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* The love of God therefore goes further

than anything that man would even dream of doing. Christ died, not for the righteous and good, but for the unpromising and the unresponsive—for out-and-out sinners. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4: 10.) Thus the contrast with man's love emphasizes God's love. It is great on the part of man to die for the good and benevolent, but Jesus died for sinners, for his enemies, for those who hated and abused him. He died for those who scourged and crucified him, and even prayed for their forgiveness while he was dying. And not only that, he freely forgave them when they turned to him, made them members of his body, and counted them as his own brethren. There has never been any other love like that.

The term "commendeth" is in the present tense, and the implication is that God continues to establish his love in that the death of his Son remains as its most striking manifestation. That love still speaks to those who are not concerned with what God has done for them; and this is the world's only hope, namely, that God, knowing the attitude of the world toward him, does not abandon it to its own destruction. Instead, he lights the flare where the night is the blackest, and sets up his standard where things are at their worst. (Cf. Rom. 11: 33-36.)

*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. If God did so much for us while we were sinners and his enemies, what will he do, now that we*

have been redeemed and are his friends!

### What, Then, Is Our Response?

(Rom. 8: 31, 32)

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? The entire eighth chapter of Romans is given to a discussion of the superior advantages of sonship in Christ Jesus, which are open to the believers; and an analysis of the chapter may be made as follows: (1) The Spirit as the principle of righteousness and life, 1-11; (2) the sustaining power which Christians have in their present weakness, 12-27; (3) the assurance of God's eternal and unchangeable love in Christ for his people, 28-39. These are the "things" which Paul had in mind when he asked, "What then shall we say to these things?"

Paul's own answer to this question is found in the remaining part of the chapter. If God has done so much for us, and especially in making us his children, how can any one doubt that he will withhold from us any other good thing. Furthermore, no one can bring against us any charge which will result in our condemnation; for we have Christ to intercede for us and God to acquit us. And, too, there is nothing which can separate us from God's love, but instead we shall be more than conquerors through him that loved us.

But we must remember that there is something for us to do. There is no doubt about the Lord's part, so we must be concerned with our own attitude. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) It always remains true that "as he thinketh within himself, so is he." (See Prov. 23: 7.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

Why is John 3:16 a favorite of so many Bible readers?  
Why is it often called the golden text of the Bible?  
What is meant when it is referred to as the divine triangle?  
What are some of the Impressions this passage has made on various people?

What can the unbeliever offer in its stead? Give reasons for your answer.

### The Golden Text

Why is the naming of a new-born babe so significant?  
Why was this so important in Jewish families?  
Why did God's Son receive the name which was given to him?  
What does it mean for one to be saved from sin?

**God's Unspeakable Gift**

How did Jesus regard the Old Testament Scriptures?  
 Why did he introduce the raising of the serpent in the wilderness by Moses?  
 Give the principal facts regarding that Old Testament incident.  
 In what particulars did it illustrate the mission of Christ?  
 Analyse the contents of John 3: 16.  
 What is the real significance of eternal life?  
 What is meant by the "quality" of eternal life?  
 Why, then, will the quality of life continue forever?  
 In what two senses is the term "believe" used in the New Testament?  
 In what sense is it used here? Give reasons for your answer.

**What the Giving of Christ Meant**

In what way does the believer receive eternal life?  
 How do the first two sections of our lesson stand related to each other?  
 In what sense were people "weak" when Christ died for them?  
 What was the great motive behind the death of Christ?  
 How and when was the plan of salvation perfected?  
 What was meant by saying that in due season Christ died for the ungodly?

How does all of this illustrate and emphasize the love of God?  
 What was Paul's purpose in introducing the "righteous," and "good" man?  
 What is the difference between a righteous and a good man?  
 In what way did God "commend" his love toward us?  
 How did Jesus demonstrate his love for the sinful race?  
 What is the significance of the present tense of "commend"?  
 Why is God's love for the world its only hope?  
 If the death of Christ meant so much to the human race, what must his life mean to them?  
 Show how this is true.

**What, Then, Is Our Response?**

What things did Paul ask about?  
 Give a summary of the eighth chapter of Romans.  
 What was Paul's own answer to the question he asked?  
 What is the Christian's real grounds for his great confidence?  
 Why can't any one bring a charge of condemnation against God's people?  
 What only can separate one from the love of God?  
 What is man's responsibility in all of this?

**Lesson III—July 16, 1961**

**THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Lesson Text**

**Rom. 8: 12-17, 26, 27; Gal. 5: 22-26**

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh:

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Ab-ba, Father.

16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.

. . . . .

26 And in like manner the Spirit

also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 Meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.

26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Rom. 8: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 16: 7-11.

## Daily Bible Readings

July 10. M.....	The Spirit Promised (Joel 2: 28-32)
July 11. T.....	Coming of the Spirit (Acts 2: 1-6)
July 12. W.....	Reception of the Spirit (Acts 19: 1-7)
July 13. T.....	Intercession of the Spirit (Rom. 8: 26-30)
July 14. F.....	Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12: 1-11)
July 15. S.....	The Spirit a Comforter (John 14: 25-31)
July 16. S.....	Inspiration of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2: 6-13)

TIME.—Galatians was written in A.D. 57; Romans, in A.D. 58.

PLACE.—Both letters were written in Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Roman and Galatian Christians.

### Introduction

Many people usually speak of the Holy Spirit as a member of the Godhead, but they are not very clear as to what they mean by the Godhead. The "Godhead" is a New Testament word, but it is nowhere used to designate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a group of Divine Personalities. The term which more nearly describes that relationship is Trinity, which, of course, is not a New Testament word. The idea, however, is a New Testament idea, and it appears that it is perfectly in order to refer to the Sacred Three as the Trinity. The expression "the Sacred Three" is also not a New Testament expression, but who wants to deny that the idea is a New Testament idea?

The word "Godhead" is found three times in the King James Version (Acts 17: 29; Rom. 1: 20; Col. 2: 9), but only twice in the American Standard Version (Acts 17: 29; Col. 2: 9). The latter version has "divinity" in Rom. 1: 20. It is also worthy of notice that in each of the three passages just cited, there is a different original word for the term in question. Acts 17: 29 has *theion*, which clearly refers to the nature of God, or that which is divine. Rom. 1: 20 has *theiotes*, which signifies the sum-total of the divine attributes. Col. 2: 9 has *theotes*, that is, the Divine Personality. The term found in Romans also has the idea of "Godhood." (Cf. manhood, childhood, etc.) Godhood and Godhead mean the same thing. Manhood implies all that which makes a man a man, and so when Godhood is ascribed to God, it signifies that all that which enters into the idea of God belongs to him.

The New Testament teaches that God is *one* (Mark 12: 29), and that idea must always be kept in mind.

We must not think that there were three distinct and independent personalities from the beginning; for that would be polytheism. And, too, we must not entertain the idea that Jehovah created the beings who later became known as the Son and the Holy Spirit; that would make them inferior to God. (Cf. John 1:1; Col. 2: 9.) God's Spirit and God's Word were just as much parts of his being as God himself. In fact, they were all *one* God.

We learn from the New Testament that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1: 14.) This signifies that the Word of God was personified, and thereafter was regarded as a distinct personality. The personality of the Spirit is also revealed in the New Testament, and he, too, is regarded as a distinct personality, known as the Holy Spirit. The expression *Holy Spirit* (with a capital "H") is nowhere found in the Old Testament (cf. Psalm 51: 11; Isa. 63: 10, 11). This, in a word, is the method by which God revealed himself in the perfection and execution of the scheme of human redemption.

This recognition of the Holy Spirit as distinguishable from the Father, and yet as inseparable from him in the total life of God, becomes more and more evident as the New Testament Scriptures unfold themselves. The Holy Spirit is regarded as a personal reality—"he" rather than "it"—whose special work it is to bring to fulfillment in human experience the whole meaning of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the human race. The Holy Spirit is therefore "God-with-man" (cf. Eph. 2: 22); but he is not God in his totality, any more than the Incarnate

Son of God in his totality. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit are used in-

terchangeably with God. (Cf. Heb. 1: 8; Acts 5: 4b, 9.)

## The Golden Text

This portion of our study today is found in the lesson text, and will be treated in its regular order.

## The Text Explained

### The Leading of the Spirit

Rom. 8: 12-17

*So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* In the closing part of the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul described the spiritual struggle within the sinner from which only Christ can deliver. And then in the beginning of chapter eight, he discusses the new life which is in Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." (Rom. 8: 1, 2.) Having thus been freed from the fleshly relationship, the redeemed child of God is under no further obligation to the flesh, but must order his life from now on as the Spirit directs. This lesson cannot be over-emphasized.

The language in these verses is addressed to Christians, and the death which shall be theirs if they live after the flesh is spiritual or eternal death; and this is something which no advocate of the impossibility of apostasy, so as to be finally lost, can ever explain away. The Lord does his part in saving people from their sins, and then the obligation to continue in his favor rests upon their shoulders. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 3-11.) Christians can put to death the deeds of the body by restraining and controlling the desires of the flesh; and this, in turn, is accomplished by following the law which has been given by the Spirit, namely, that which is contained in the New Testament. (Cf. Col. 3: 5-11.)

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* There are some things about the leading of the Spirit which is easy for us to understand, as, for example, by following the instruction which, is

contained in his revelation to us. No one can do that which the New Testament teaches him to do, without being led in the direction which the Lord wants him to go. This, of course, implies that the child of God will come under the influence of this inspired teaching, and that he will make a sincere effort to be governed by it in all of his relationships of life.

In addition to the objective guidance of the Holy Spirit Christians are assured also of his abiding presence with them continually. The Holy Spirit dwells within every person who has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. (See Acts 2: 38, 39; 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19, 20.) "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3: 16-19.) This type of influence is not always so easy to see and understand, but by faith we can accept the promise and be comforted by it.

James speaks of the same principle, when he says, "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways." (James 1: 5-8.) Christians are taught to ask for guidance for all their needs; and as certain as God through the Spirit answers their prayers, just that certain are they being led by

the Spirit. (See Phil. 4: 6, 7; Heb. 13: 5, 6; 4: 14-16; Rom. 8: 26, 27.)

The leading of the Spirit, therefore, consists of all the influences of every kind which he brings to bear upon our spirits, and which enable us to keep the body under control, or, which is the same thing, to live the kind of life which is acceptable to God. "So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2: 12, 13.) Of one thing we may be certain, the Holy Spirit never leads anyone to do anything short of, more than, or different from what is clearly taught in the word, which is the "sword of the Spirit."

For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*. The type of service which people rendered under the law of Moses, as well as that which was done according to pagan religions, was, to a great extent, actuated by fear; and Paul therefore told the Roman brethren that in becoming Christians they were not "again" made subject to fear, that is, the fear growing out of the spirit of bondage. Instead, they received the spirit of "sonship" according to the law of love, with the result that all slavish fear has been put away. "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.)

In speaking of the spirit of adoption, the reference is apparently to the legal process of the Romans whereby one man took another's child to be his own son, with the result that the adopted son took the name and rank of his new father, and stood in precisely the same legal relation to him as a born son did. The term "Abba" is the Aramaic or Chaldaic word for *father*, and it probably was used by Greek-speaking Jews, because of its sacredness, along with their own term "father." (Cf. Mark 14: 36; Gal. 4: 6.)

*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children*

*of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.* All through this section of our lesson Paul is setting forth the proof that we are children of God, if we are led by the Spirit. It has already been pointed out that the Spirit leads people both by the teaching of the word, and through God's providential care. All of this testimony points to the fact that we are God's children; and when our own conscience, enlightened by the teaching of the word, testifies within us that we are doing the things commanded, then we have the testimony of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are indeed God's children, and subject to his ever-watching providence. The conclusion, then, must follow that we shall be heirs of all that heaven holds for those who have been received into the family of the Father, if indeed the conditions of faithfulness are duly met. It must always be remembered that suffering must precede glory. (Cf. Acts 14: 22; 2 Tim. 2: 11-13.)

### The Intercession by the Spirit

Rom. 8: 26, 27

*And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* We gather from the closing part of the last section of our lesson that the life of the Christian pilgrimage will involve us in suffering, yet we are encouraged to bear whatever comes to us in that way; for whatever trials we may be called upon to endure are only for the present, and are in no way to be compared with the joys which await us in the glory world. We are therefore urged to be patient and to live in hope of our final salvation. (Read Rom. 8: 18-25.)

But along with the encouragement which we receive from the sympathetic groanings of creation and our own well-grounded hopes, we have the help of the Spirit himself. The

same Spirit who leads us into the ways of righteousness, also aids us in matters too great and deep for our understanding. The revealed will of God teaches us to pray, and what to pray for; but in our great weakness in the face of the great issues of life, we often find that we do not know how to pray as we should; both with reference to the manner and the object. This should not surprise us, however; for both Jesus and Paul had the same experience. (Cf. John 12: 27, 28; Phil. 1: 22-24.)

The term "helpeth" is found in the New Testament only here and in Luke 10: 40, where Martha requested Jesus to bid Mary help her, that is, *share* the service with her. We are not to get the idea, therefore, that the Spirit takes over our praying for us; he simply aids us in our own efforts. The "groanings which cannot be uttered" are apparently our inward desires and yearnings which are prompted by the Spirit; and although we cannot express them in articulate language ourselves, the Spirit is able to interpret them to God for us. The "mind of the Spirit" is probably the mind or mental disposition which the Spirit has produced in us. God, accordingly, understands that which the Spirit is doing in conjunction with his people; because it is according to his will. There are few passages in the New Testament which are calculated to give greater encouragement to earnest praying, when correctly understood, than this one.

### The Fruit of the Spirit

Gal. 5: 22-26

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.* The term "but" with which this section of our lesson begins points to the contrast between the "works of the flesh" (verses 19-21) and the "fruit of the Spirit." The only way to please God is for men to regulate their lives according to the direction of the Spirit; and it will then be impossible for them to carry out the desires of the flesh.

The fruit of the Spirit as given in the verses now under consideration may be spoken of as the moral re-

sults which the Holy Spirit brings about in the lives of those in whom he dwells. The list given here, however, is not to be regarded as exhaustive; for the Sermon on the Mount and Ephesians and Philipians contain certain other graces which are not named here. There is practically no end to the possible combinations of the letters of the alphabet; and just so with the qualities which go to make up the Christian character.

In Rom. 8: 9, Paul says, "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit, because Christ is the immediate channel and the occasion of his being given to men. (Cf. Acts 2: 37-39; Rom. 5: 5; Gal. 3: 14.) And if we are to be tested by the possession of the Spirit of Christ, we must have a clear conception of just what it means to have the Spirit. It may be said that the manifestation of the Spirit may be summed up in the word "love"; but we are bound to break up the thought of love, and see how it expresses itself in Christ. All of this is spoken of as the fruit of the Spirit.

The list given in the text now under consideration easily falls into three groups of three each: (1) *love, joy, peace*. This group concerns our relation to God. Love heads the list, and the other two are plainly consequences of the first, that is, joy and peace are the normal state of those who love God. (2) *Longsuffering, kindness, goodness*. This group pertains to our relation to our fellow men. Longsuffering can bear with the frailties and provocations of others. Kindness is rendering service to others; while goodness is a positive virtue. Not only must Christians *be* good; they must also do good. (3) *Faithfulness, meekness, self-control*. This group has to do with one's own self. Faithfulness is fidelity; and such a person is not unfaithful to his known duty. (Cf. James 4: 17.) Meekness is gentleness of strength; it is patience in the reception of injuries and the opposite of sudden anger, make, and long-harbored desire for vengeance. (Cf. Rom. 12: 19-21.) Self-control comprehends every form of temperance, and includes the mastery of all appetites, tempers,

and passions. It is holding oneself within due limits, as it respects pleasures, duties, and all things else.

*And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof.* (See Gal. 2: 20; Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 3: 5-17.)

*If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not*

*become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.* If we profess to live by the Spirit's guidance, then let us walk as he directs. Or, to state the same thing in other words, let our life be consistent with our profession. This will result in our having the proper attitude toward God and our fellow men.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Who or what is the Holy Spirit?

What is the "Godhead"?

What is the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Godhead?

What is the relation of the Holy Spirit to God?

What is the mission of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation?

### The Leading of the Spirit

In what sense are we not debtors to the flesh?

What contrast does Paul draw between the two types of living?

What bearing does this scripture have on the question of apostasy?

How may Christians put to death the deeds of the body?

In what way are people led by the Spirit?

What does the New Testament teach regarding the indwelling of the Spirit?

Distinguish between the "external" and the "internal" influence of the Spirit.

Give some example of the *internal* influence of the Spirit on Christians.

In view of that which has been said, give a clear statement of what it means to be led by the Spirit.

In what sense are people able to work out their own salvation?

What are the spirits of bondage and adoption?

What is the meaning of the expression "Abba, Father"?

In what sense does the Spirit bear witness with our spirits?

What does it mean to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ?

What condition must be met before one gains his inheritance?

### The Intercession by the Spirit

Why is intercession on the part of the Spirit necessary?

Why is it that we do not know how to pray as we ought?

What is meant by the term "helpeth"?

What are the groanings which cannot be uttered?

What is the mind of the Spirit?

What great encouragement should we get from this passage regarding prayer?

### The Fruit of the Spirit

What is placed in contrast with the fruit of the Spirit?

What is the fruit of the Spirit?

What is known of the abundance of this fruit?

What does Paul say regarding the necessity of possessing the Spirit?

How may it be known that one has the Spirit?

What manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit does Paul list in the text?

In what way are they divided?

Give the meaning and show the application of each item mentioned.

What have all who belong to Christ done, and how did they do it?

What exhortation did Paul give regarding our profession and conduct?

## Lesson IV—July 23, 1961

# THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

### Lesson Text

#### Psalm 19: 7-14; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17

7 The law of Je-ho'-vah is perfect, restoring the soul:

The testimony of Je-ho'-vah is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of Je-ho'-vah are right, rejoicing the heart:

The commandment of Je-ho'-vah is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of Je-ho'-vah is clean, enduring for ever:

The ordinances of Je-ho'-vah are true, and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned:

In keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can discern *his* errors?

Clear thou me from hidden faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*;  
 Let them not have dominion over me:  
 Then shall I be upright,  
 And I shall be clear from great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
 Be acceptable in thy sight,  
 O Je-ho'-vah, my rock, and my redeemer.

14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast

been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Je'-sus.

16 Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm 119: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 6: 6-9.

**Daily Bible Readings**

July 17. M.....	An Inspired Word (2 Tim. 3: 14-17)
July 18. T.....	A Precious Word (Psalm 19: 7-14)
July 19. W.....	A Divine Guide (2 Pet. 1: 12-21)
July 20. T.....	Jesus and the Word (Matt. 4: 1-11)
July 21. F.....	Satisfaction in the Scriptures (Psalm 1)
July 22. S.....	Teaching the Word (Neh. 8: 1-8)
July 23. S.....	Light for Our Path (Psalm 119: 105-112)

TIME.—Psalm, unknown except during the lifetime of David; Second Timothy, A.D. 68.

PLACES.—Psalm, probably in Palestine; Second Timothy, Rome.

PERSONS.—David, Paul, and Timothy.

**Introduction**

The expression "The Holy Scriptures" has reference to the Bible, which is made up of the Old and New Testaments. The term originally referred to the Old Testament alone, as may be seen from such passages as John 5: 39; Luke 24:27; 1 Cor. 15: 3; 2 Tim. 3: 15 (King James Version). This was true before the New Testament was written, or while it was in the process of being written. There are, of course, many other compositions of human origin which are very properly called scriptures; but they do not belong to the "holy scriptures" or "sacred writings" which are under consideration in our lesson for today. This is true because that which is contained in the Bible is the inspired revelation of the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Luke 1: 70; 2 Pet. 1: 21.) This is that which distinguishes the holy scriptures from all other writings which are available to men. The word "scriptures" literally means *writings*.

The Bible is the most remarkable book the world has ever seen. An

unknown author has said, "This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened in the judgment, and be remembered for ever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest

labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents."

A preacher of a generation ago said, "Many years ago I entered the temple of God's revelation. I entered the portico of Genesis, walked down through the Old Testament art gallery where the pictures of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Daniel hung on the wall. I passed into the music room of the Psalms where the Spirit swept the keyboard of nature and brought forth the dirgelike wail of the weeping prophet Jeremiah to the grand, impassioned strain of Isaiah, until it seemed that every reed and pipe in God's great organ of nature responded to the tuneful touch of David, the sweet singer of Israel. I entered the chapel of Ecclesiastes, where the voice of the preacher was heard, and into the conservatory of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley's sweet-scented spices filled and perfumed my life. I entered the business office of the Proverbs, then into

the observatory-room of the prophets, where I saw telescopes of various sizes, some pointing to far-off events, but all concentrated upon the bright and morning Star which was to rise over the moonlit hills of Judaea for our salvation. I entered the audience-room of the King of Kings, and caught a vision of his glory from the standpoint of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; passed into the Acts of the Apostles, where the Holy Spirit was doing his work in the formation of the infant church. Then into the correspondence-room, where sat Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude, penning their epistles. I stepped into the throne-room of Revelation, where all towered into glittering peaks, and I got a vision of the King sitting upon his throne in all his glory, and I cried: 'All hail the power of Jesus' name,

Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all.' "

### The Golden Text

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." The eternal destiny of every human soul depends upon a knowledge of and obedience to the sacred writings which God has seen fit to make known to the human race. These holy scriptures are not the expression of the arbitrary decisions of a tyrannical despot who rules with jealous rigor over the peoples of the earth. They are, instead, the revelation of the eternal principles of life, which if accepted and made the rule of life, will result in happiness both here and in the world to come.

The passage which serves as our golden text for today is a part of a prayer which the psalmist offered regarding God's law. "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live; so will I observe thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy

law. I am a sojourner in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thine ordinances at all times. . . ." (Psalm 119: 17-20.)

This is a prayer of faith, and the suppliant clearly recognized that it is only by God's grace that anyone can know his law and thereby live an acceptable life in his service.

Anyone with the attitude of the psalmist expects to see wondrous things in the law of Jehovah. It is as if he were going into a great treasure-house, with hardly a limit to that which he might behold. When people approach the word of God in this manner, they will have no difficulty in discovering that which God wants them to do. Jesus said, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." (John 7: 17; cf. Matt. 13: 12.)

### The Text Explained

#### The Perfection and Excellence of God's Law

(Psalm 19: 7-11)

*The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the*

*simple. The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever: the ordinances of Jehovah are true,*

*and righteous altogether.* Many of the Old Testament psalms were written according to the principles of *parallelism*, a form of Hebrew poetry, in which an essential likeness, similarity, or analogy, was observed in successive passages or clauses. The verses just quoted present a striking example of that type of poetry. It will be helpful to those studying this lesson if the passage is read in its poetic arrangement, as set forth in the American Standard Version.

With the idea of "parallelism" in mind, it will be seen that the terms "law," "testimony," "precepts," "commandment," "fear," and "ordinances" are used as synonyms, and that each of them meant to the writer of the Psalm in which they are found, that is, to David, what the expression "holy scriptures" means to us. It is possible, of course, that David had in mind only the scriptures of his day, while we think of the whole Bible. Some people may try to make David's words refer to the entire Old Testament, but if any one will only stop to think, he will realize that much of that portion of the word of God had not been written, any more than had the New Testament. It seems proper, therefore, to apply the terms to any part of God's revelation while serving the purpose for which it was given.

The student of the Bible must always handle aright the word of truth, which includes, of course, a distinction between the Old and the New Testaments, as we have them today. The revelation which God gave to his people was progressive in its nature; but it is all necessary in order to understand his will. So with this in mind, we, with the psalmist, may say that the word of God is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true, for the purpose of restoring the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes; that it endures forever, and is righteous altogether. People who feel this way about the divine record can always know that they are being blessed when they read and study any part of it. (Cf. Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 11; Heb. 11: 39, 40.) The specific things which people are to do today in order to be saved are set forth in the law of Christ.

*More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.* This is the highest estimate which one can place upon the word of God. The truths which he has revealed, and especially that part which is applicable to those of any given age, should mean more to them than the greatest amount of the finest and most precious treasures, and the most exquisite and delicious food.

*Moreover by them is thy servant warned: in keeping them there is great reward.* These are the practical purposes for which the word of God has been given. God's requirements can have no greater end than man's true happiness. Since the fall of Adam, man has always been subject to sin and its influences; and it is always necessary to warn him of the terrible consequences which he must suffer, if he continues in the evil way. But the man who delights to keep that which God has said to him may always be sure that his reward will be great.

### A Fervent Prayer

(Psalm 19: 12-14)

*Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be clear from great transgression.* One of the great mysteries which is common to man is that of his own being. How little does he know of himself! There are regions within him which are unexplored; and his heart is substantially undiscovered. Such must have been the feeling of the psalmist when he wrote the words of the verses just quoted.

Paul has the only answer to the question, Who can discern his errors? "Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law." (See Rom. 7: 7.) Only the word of the Lord can *enlighten the eyes*, so that sin can be recognized for what it is. (Cf. John 3: 19-21.) The "hidden faults" are not secret sins, as contrasted with open sins. The same original word for "hidden" is found in Deut. 29: 29, where it is rendered *secret*; and it is very evident that its meaning is something which has not been revealed, that is, something about which

the sinner himself knows nothing. "The *secret* things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are *revealed* belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." For an example of secret or concealed sins, see Psalm 90: 8.

There are evil influences in our hearts which are unknown to us before they crystallize into habit, or break forth in unmistakable wickedness. We cannot confess these offenses, or repent of them, because they are unknown to us. (Cf. Jer. 17: 9, 10.) Sin is sin, whether we are conscious of it or not; and the principle of sin is the same, whether it be hand murder or heart murder. (Cf. 1 John 3: 15.) This is true, because sin is not confined to the outward act; it has its basis in the thoughts and motives which lie behind the act, or the potential act. (See Prov. 23: 7; 24: 9; Matt. 5: 27, 28.)

"Presumptuous sins," on the other hand, are sins which are deliberately committed. (Cf. Deut. 17: 12; Dan. 5: 20.) The Lord's attitude toward such sins is clearly set forth in Heb. 10: 26-31: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Such sins are sometimes personified as tyrants who strive to enslave their victims, but no one needs to remain under the dominion of sin. (See Rom. 6: 12-18.) David refers to presumptuous sins as the *great transgression*.

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be ac-*

*ceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer.* This is the spirit which should actuate the prayers of them who would be free from errors, both hidden faults and presumptuous sins.

### The Profitable Word

(2 Tim. 3: 14-17)

*But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* The religion which is acceptable to God is a taught religion. That was true in Old Testament times, and it is true now. (Cf. Matt. 28: 18-20.) Timothy had been taught the truth, both with respect to the Jewish law and the gospel of Christ. This passage was addressed to him just before Paul's execution, and it was in sharp contrast with that which the apostle had said regarding those who were not governed by the inspired revelation. "But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, . . ."

Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him the things of God, and that accounted for his knowing the scriptures from his childhood. (See 2 Tim. 1: 5.) It appears that Timothy, and probably his mother and grandmother, was converted during Paul's first great missionary journey; and it was during his second journey that the young man was chosen to accompany the apostle on his preaching missions. (See Acts 16: 1-3; 14: 8-20; 2 Tim. 1: 1, 2.) The "sacred writings" were the Old Testament Scriptures, and they were able to make him wise unto salvation when they were interpreted in the light of the revelation concerning Jesus. "For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10: 4; cf. 1 Pet. 1: 21.)

*Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the*

man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. That which is said here regarding the inspiration of the scriptures is true of both the Old and New Testaments; and they are both "profitable" for the purpose for which they were given. No one can read the New Testament without being deeply impressed with the abiding value of the Old Testament; but it must be kept constantly in mind that the New Testament is the portion of God's revelation under which people today must live.

Paul mentions four things for which the scriptures are profitable: (1) *Teaching*. No one can obey God until he knows his will. (Cf. Acts 2: 42.) (2) *Reproof*. This carries with it the idea of convicting or pointing out one's sins to him. (John

16: 8.) (3) *Correction*. To correct one's erroneous ways, or get him out of the wrong and into the right. (4) *Instruction which is in righteousness*. "Instruction which aims at the increase of virtue."—Thayer. (Cf. 2 Pet. 3: 18.)

The overall purpose for which the scriptures were given is that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. This means that the Bible as God gave it is sufficient for every need which any child of his can possibly have. This does not imply that every specific experience which a person may have is covered in detail in the word of God; but it does imply that the principles which are set forth therein do cover and are applicable to all the issues of life.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What is meant by the Holy Scriptures?  
What is the meaning of the term "scriptures"?  
Why do we refer to the Bible as the Holy Scriptures?  
Discuss the contents of the Bible.  
Show how the scriptures should be divided and studied.

#### The Golden Text

Why would the psalmist want to make a petition like this?  
What are some of the wondrous things contained in God's law?  
What attitude of mind must one have, if he really sees the truth?

#### The Perfection and Excellence of God's Law

What type of poetry did the psalmists often use to express their thoughts?  
Show how that form was used in the case now before us.  
What were the different terms used here to describe God's word?  
Why is it important to handle aright the word of truth?  
What did the psalmist say that the word of God would do?  
What impression should all of this leave on us today?  
What is said regarding the worth of God's word to the human soul?  
Why illustrate by gold and honey?  
What are the practical purposes for which the Bible was given?

#### A Fervent Prayer

What is one of the mysteries common to the human race?

How may one discern his errors?  
What is the meaning of "hidden faults"?  
Distinguish between "hidden faults" and "concealed sins".  
How do we know that it is possible for us to have hidden faults and not know about them?  
What are "presumptuous sins"?  
What does the New Testament teach regarding them?  
In what sense can sins have dominion over any one?  
Why did the psalmist conclude his prayer as he did?

#### The Profitable Word

Why do we say that Bible religion is a "taught" religion?  
How did Jesus illustrate this truth?  
What had Timothy been taught?  
Why did Paul mention that fact in this connection?  
Who were Timothy's teachers?  
How did he come under the influence of Paul?  
How can the "sacred writings" make one wise unto salvation?  
How much of the Bible was inspired?  
Give reasons for your answer.  
What do we learn from the New Testament regarding the abiding value of the Old Testament?  
For what did Paul say the scriptures are profitable?  
How are they profitable for teaching?  
How are they profitable for reproof?  
How are they profitable for correction?  
How are they profitable for instruction which is in righteousness?  
What is the overall purpose of the word of God?

Lesson V—July 30, 1961

SIN AND ITS TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES

Lesson Text

Gen. 3: 6; Gal. 6: 7, 8; Rom. 5: 12-18

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

12 Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—

13 For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Mo'-ses, even over them

that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.

16 And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment come of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification.

17 For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Je'-sus Christ.

18 So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Rom. 6: 23.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 1: 5-10.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 24. M.....Sin's Entrance into the Race (Gen. 3: 1-8)
- July 25. T.....Sin as Transgression (Rom. 3: 10-18)
- July 26. W.....Sin as Unrighteousness (1 John 5: 13-21)
- July 27. T.....Wages of Sin (Rom. 6: 15-23)
- July 28. F.....Confession of Sin (Psalm 51: 1-10)
- July 29. S....."Sin No More" (John 8: 3-11)
- July 30. S.....Forgiveness of Sin (Mark 2: 1-12)

TIME.—Genesis, A.M. 1, or probably soon thereafter; Galatians, A.D. 57; Romans, A.D. 58.

PLACE.—The garden of Eden; Galatians and Romans were written in Corinth.

PERSONS.—Adam and Eve, Paul and the Galatian and Roman brethren.

Introduction

One of the great tragedies of our time is the lost sense of sin. It may, in fact, be said that such has characterized most ages since sin entered into the world. Most of the people in the average community look upon Christ as the dominant personality of the ages, and they feel that his word,

theoretically at least, embodies the final authority in spiritual living; but when it comes to the sense of sin which so afflicted and tormented his spirit while he was here among men, that has been largely lost sight of by people on all sides.

We shall never get to the root of

the matter of sin, until we learn that only from the Bible can we learn just what sin is. Paul said, "Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law." (See Rom. 7: 7.) The Bible is not a book of definitions, nor a dictionary of terms; but any one who will make a careful study of it can easily learn what God thinks about any subject which relates to human beings and their spiritual welfare. He has, accordingly, revealed himself regarding sin; and, while there is no formal definition of the subject found in the Bible, yet we can know what he says sin is, and what his attitude toward it is. His standard of judgment is, of course, correct, and any deviation from it on the part of man is wrong.

Cruden notes that any thought, word, action, omission, or desire, contrary to the law of God, is sin. It is, as the marginal note in the American Standard Version has it, "to miss the mark." (See 1 Tim. 1: 6; 2 Tim. 2: 18.) The following passages set forth that which may be regarded as *manifestations* of sin; and they should give us a fairly clear idea as to the practical meaning of the term. (1) "And whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14: 23.) Faith is here contrasted with doubt;

therefore, any one who attempts to serve God in that about which he has doubts is to be guilty of sin. It is sin because it is both reckless and presumptuous—reckless, in that it is rash and careless; presumptuous, in that it is performed unto God without being convinced that it is right.

(2) "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4.) This is to have a contempt for and live in violation of law; a manifestation of disregard for law. The identical original word (*anomia*, iniquity) was used by Jesus in Matt. 7: 23, where its obvious purpose was to designate actively religious people who had disregarded his law, that is who acted without his authority. (Read Matt. 7: 21-23.)

(3) "All unrighteousness is sin." (1 John 5: 17.) This, according to Thayer, is "a deed violating law and justice, an act of unrighteousness." It includes every branch of duty, and everything which comes short of the requirements of justice. (4) "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.) The unused knowledge of one's duty is the sin of omission. (Cf. Heb. 2: 1-3.) There is nothing which injures the soul more than wasted impressions. (See James 1: 23-25.)

## The Golden Text

*"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* This passage gives a kind of summary and a conclusion which Paul stated following his arguments concerning the grace of God. God's grace is personified as a master, and over against that master is another one which claims the service of the people of the earth, namely sin. In the first part of chapter 6, the apostle shows that all who submit themselves to God's will through Christ die to sin, and are under no further obligation to serve that master. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not

under law, but under grace." (Rom. 6: 12-14.)

Paul then goes on to show the inconsistency of a child of God devoting his time and effort in the service of the evil one; and he illustrates his point by the figure of transferring slaves from one master to another. (See Rom. 6: 15-23.) Beginning with verse 19, we read, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end

eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thus, in one single verse, our golden text for today, Paul condenses the arguments which he had made in the previous part of the chapter; and the condensation contains three affirmations. (1) That wages will be

paid to every servant of sin. This master pays its devotees by punishing them with eternal death. (2) God does not pay wages, for no one can earn that which he has to offer those who serve him. His reward is a free gift, namely, eternal life. (Cf. Eph. 2:8.) (3) Every responsible individual must face these two alternatives. (Cf. 2. Cor. 5: 10.)

## The Text Explained

### The Entrance of Sin into the World

(Gen. 3: 6)

*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.* Prior to the incident now before us, Adam and Eve knew nothing of sin. They were completely happy in their home in Eden, and enjoyed daily fellowship with Jehovah. But sin had already invaded the universe; for the god of this world had rebelled against God, and he was then at work in his effort to lead man astray.

The particular agent through which Satan worked in his efforts to bring sin into the world, so far as humanity is concerned, was the serpent. No better comment can be made on the question now before us than to quote the inspired record which leads up to the text we are considering. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto

her husband with her, and he did eat. (Gen. 3: 1-6.)

This incident grew out of the circumstance surrounding the command which Jehovah gave the couple when he put them into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. "And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (See Gen. 2: 15-17.) Thus, from the beginning man was subject to the law of God, but it is very evident that he did not know God's motive for issuing the commandment. That, however, was no excuse for his disobedience; for he knew Jehovah, and he understood exactly what he was told to do.

But the serpent was skilled in the art of temptation, and he soon had the woman's imagination and feelings completely under his control. Her fall quickly became a reality, and her husband was not long in following her. This is the history of every temptation, and every sin: (1) The outward object of attraction; (2) the inward troubling of the mind; and (3) the increase and triumph of passionate desire, which ends in the degradation, slavery, and ruin of the soul. (Cf. James 1: 13-15; 1 John 2: 15-17; 2 Cor. 2: 11.)

### An Immutable Law of God

(Gal. 6: 7, 8)

*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.* This section of our lesson is taken from that portion of Galatians in which Paul exhorted the brethren to abide by

the moral consequences which logically and legitimately result from the gospel which he preached. Its immediate context follows the exhortation to walk as the Spirit directs (see 5: 25, 26), and that which is said regarding sowing and reaping is found in the midst of some rules of conduct which must be observed, if one is to walk by the Spirit.

It is one of Paul's characteristics to enforce the commonest duties by the highest motives. His habit was to link the separate actions of life to great principles by which they were dominated, and in accordance with which they were regulated; for it is a demonstrable fact that when people are governed by principle, rather than by policy, their lives are channeled in the way of righteousness.

The principle which is involved in the passage now under consideration is of universal application; it is the postulate of all moral responsibility. It asserts the continuity of personal existence, and sets forth the connection between cause and effect in human character. Man is therefore, to a very great extent, the master of his own destiny; for *corruption* and *eternal life* are in every case the proper harvest from the kind of sowing which is done in this life. Not only is the warning fitted to awaken the careless; it is equally suited to cheer and encourage the fainthearted.

All responsible people are sowing, and all must reap; and the future therefore will be but the harvest of the present. Nothing of importance is completed here; but all that is done here will have its effect on the time to come. This is abundantly illustrated by the influence which each period of life has on the one which succeeds it—youth, manhood, old age. "The child is father of the man." But it should be remembered that this law is not necessarily fatal; for the New Testament points to the way of regeneration. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17; Tit. 3: 4-7.)

Paul emphasizes the folly of self-deception: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." The original word for "mocked" is denned by Thayer to mean "to turn up the nose or sneer at; to mock, deride." Here it seems to indicate that the principles of divine administration cannot be treated with contempt or successfully evaded. But the danger of self-deception is very

real; for the interval between the sowing and the reaping in the moral and spiritual world is much longer than it is in the natural world, and the connection between them is not as easily seen.

The truth just stated may be illustrated in many ways. Consider, for example, a child which has been foolishly brought up. No effort was made to train its will to obedience, or to instill into its mind a reverence for God, and a love for the higher things of life. There is a certain pleasure in allowing the little fellow to have his own way; and it is in this way that the evil seeds were sown. By and by the child becomes a man, with the result that years lie between the sowing and the reaping. Only then may it be that the harvest of pain and shame comes home which brings the gray head with sorrow to the grave. The interval is so long that the connection between the sorrow and the foolish training is not recognized, and the parents wonder why their child is so stubborn, self-willed, and ungrateful. They do not realize that they are the victims of their own folly. Twenty years ago they sowed the seeds from which they are now reaping the bitter harvest. They deceived themselves, but God is not mocked.

### Adam and Christ Contrasted

(Rom. 5: 12-18)

*Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.* The New Testament does not go into great detail about the manner in which sin entered the world. It is concerned, rather, with the salvation which was provided through Christ. The manner in which sin came into the lives of the human race was discussed in the first section of this lesson; and when Paul speaks of the "man" through whom it came, he was thinking of the completion of the process and of Adam as the head of the race. The "death" which passed unto all men was probably *spiritual* death, which would also include physical death. The latter would never have occurred, if the former had not come first. "All men" sinned through Adam as their representative: just as *all men* who accept the gospel are

righteous through Christ as their representative.

For until *the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law.* Many Bible students regard verses 13-17 as parenthetical, in which Paul entered into the proof that all sinned in Adam, as their federal head, and incurred the death penalty because of that sin, rather than because of their personal sins. The expression "until the law" apparently refers to the period between Adam and Moses. That period indeed had law (cf. Rom. 2: 12-16), namely, moral law, otherwise they could not have been such great sinners. (See Gen. 6:11-13.) That, however, does not seem to be the phase of the question which Paul has under discussion.

*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.* In order to understand Paul's argument, we must remember that God gave Adam a law of life and death, and then refrained from giving any other such law until Moses. This means that people between Adam and Moses did not sin in the sense of violating a positive commandment with a death penalty, as Adam did. But still the people died because of Adam's sin. Adam was a figure of Christ in that both were representative heads of the race.

*But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.* There is indeed a likeness between the circumstances surrounding Adam's

transgression, and those surrounding the sacrificial death of Christ, for Adam is a type of Christ; but there is also a contrast between them. That which Adam did resulted in death for all men, while that which Christ did made possible the salvation of all, that is, Christ counteracted all that Adam did, but he did more than that: he made it possible for men to be saved from their own sins.

*And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ.* Paul makes it plain that the death of Christ resulted in the restoration of all that was lost in Adam, which, incidentally, is unconditional, so far as the human race is concerned; but his death did more than that: it made possible for forgiveness of many (all) trespasses, which is conditional—"they that receive," etc.

*So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life.* This verse appears to be a continuation of verse 12, with verses 13-17 as explanatory. Adam's sin resulted in condemnation; but Christ's act of righteous (his death on the cross) freed all men from that condemnation. If therefore there is punishment after the resurrection, it will be because of personal sins, rather than that of Adam. (Cf. 2. Pet. 3: 9.)

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What is one of the great tragedies of our time? and why?  
Why is it so important to learn the true meaning of sin?  
How alone can this be done?  
What is the primary meaning of sin?  
What are some of its principal manifestations?

#### The Golden Text

What was Paul's purpose in the language of the golden text?

How did he illustrate and enforce his teaching regarding these questions?  
What obligation rests upon every redeemed child of God?  
Show the manner in which Paul condensed his arguments in the golden text.

#### The Entrance of Sin Into the World

Was there any sin in the world prior to Adam and Eve? Give reasons for your answer.  
How did sin enter the world in connection with humanity?  
Describe the process through which this was done.

Out of what circumstance did this incident arise?  
 In what way was man related to God's law?  
 What is the devil's method of tempting people? and how does it affect people today?

**An Immutable Law of God**

What is the setting of this section of our lesson?  
 How did Paul go about enforcing his teaching?  
 How wide is the application of the principle involved in this lesson?  
 Why do people reap that which they sow?  
 Is this law absolutely fatal? Give reasons for your answer.  
 Why is the danger of self-deception so great?

Why can't God be mocked?  
 How may the truth of this section be illustrated?

**Adam and Christ Contrasted**

How does the New Testament treat the question of the entrance of sin into the world?  
 In what way was sin in the world before the law? and what law?  
 What was the sin "after the likeness of Adam's transgression"?  
 What is the contrast between Adam and Christ? and the comparison?  
 What effect did the sacrifice of Christ have on the sin of Adam?  
 Are people now guilty of the sin of Adam? Give reason for your answer.  
 For what will people be punished after this life is over?  
 What is God's will regarding the salvation of all men?

**Lesson VI—August 6, 1961**

**THE GRACE OF GOD**

**Lesson Text**

**Eph. 2: 1-9; Tit. 2: 11-14**

1 And you *did he make alive*, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins,

2 Wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience;

3 Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest: —

4 But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved),

6 And raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Je'-sus:

7 That in the ages to come he

might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Je'-sus:

8 For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

9 Not of works, that no man should glory.

11 For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

12 Instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world;

13 Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Je'-sus Christ;

14 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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.*" (Gen. 6: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 12: 1-9.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- July 31. M..... Saved by Grace (Eph. 2: 1-10)
- August 1. T..... Access by Grace (Rom. 5: 1-9)
- August 2. W..... Grace May Be Frustrated (Gal. 2: 9-22)
- August 3. T..... Grace and Truth by Christ (John 1: 14-17)
- August 4. F..... Partakers of Grace (Phil. 1: 1-7)
- August 5. S..... Growth in Grace Expected (2 Pet. 3: 1-18)
- August 6. S..... Grace Available to All (Titus 2: 11-15)

TIME.—Ephesians was written in A.D. 62; Titus, probably in A.D. 67.

PLACES.—Ephesians was written from Rome; Titus, probably from Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and those to whom he wrote.

### Introduction

The subject which we have for consideration today is one about which there is almost unanimous agreement among those who regard the Bible as the inspired word of God. It would be difficult to find a person who professes to believe the Bible who would contend that people today are not saved by the grace of God. There are, however, wide differences among professed believers regarding the identity of God's grace, and how people are saved by it; but they are all united in the belief that all who are saved are saved by the grace of God.

The testimony of the Scriptures regarding this subject is both clear and specific: "Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. 1: 9, 10.) "But when the

kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, 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; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Tit. 3: 4-7.)

It is interesting to observe in this connection that any difference which may exist among professed believers regarding this or any other religious subject is not over what the Bible says, but always over that which the Bible does not say. This is one of the reasons why those who desire to obey the Lord should make an honest effort to ascertain that which the Bible actually says, before trying to explain what it means. It isn't difficult to agree on that which the Bible says; but it is easy to disagree regarding those things which are not in the word of God.

### The Golden Text

"*But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.*" The case of Noah is singled out as an example of a man who was saved by grace. The context shows that the depravity of the human race during the days of Noah was almost complete, and that Jehovah decreed their destruction. "*But*" (this is the divine contrast) Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah, which means that Noah would be saved from that destruction because he was favored of God. "Grace" is favor—the unmerited favor of God. Noah did not, and could not do anything to merit God's goodness toward him. But God, on the other hand, could and did regard Noah with favor because of his devotion to righteousness.

But there were two sides to Noah's salvation: it was due to grace on God's part, but to faith on Noah's part. "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen

as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Heb. 11: 7; cf. 2 Pet. 2: 4-9.) A righteous man is one who does that which the Lord commands him to do (cf. Psalm 119: 172; Matt. 3: 15), and the principle which motivates him is faith.

The text just quoted from Hebrews says that Noah was moved with godly fear; and it is in order to ask, To what extent was he moved? The answer is found in the fact that his faith was strong enough to move him to do exactly what God told him to do; and as a result of his obedience he was saved. (Cf. John 3: 36.) Does any one think that Noah would have been saved, if he had refused to do that which God commanded him to do? When the text now un-

der consideration says that Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah, it simply means that he was found acceptable to God. This does not imply that he was entirely without fault as a human being; but it does

signify that his heart was right, and that his life was such as to make him worthy to be favored of God. This great patriarch, in contrast with the sinful people of his day, did not deserve to be lost.

### The Text Explained

#### Dead through Trespasses and Sins

(Eph. 2: 1-3)

*And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.* This passage can best be understood in the light of the closing part of chapter 1, where Paul discussed the magnitude of God's power toward believers as exhibited in the resurrection of Christ. He then goes on to show that the same mighty power is applied to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. God's power raised Christ from physical death, and it can and does raise those who are spiritually dead. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, etc., and you did he make alive."

To be "dead through your trespasses and sins" is to be spiritually separated from God. "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.) "Trespasses" are specific acts, that is, violations of known laws; while "sins" are more general and include all forms and phases' of wrong-doing, resulting in a corrupt state of living.

The sinful life to which Paul referred in verse 1 is described somewhat in detail in verse 2, 3. It appears that the "ye" refers to the Gentiles, while "we" are the Jews. The prince of the powers of the air is the devil, the one who inspired the sinful life according to the ways of the world. (Read Rom. 1: 18-32 for

an example of corrupt living.) The Jews also, according to Paul, were guilty of worldly conduct: for they, too, were actuated by "the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience"; or, to state the same thing in other words, they were also inspired in their evil conduct by the spirit of the devil. To do "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" is essential worldliness; it is to have one's own way, regardless of the character of his sins. It appears that "by nature" Paul simply meant the unconverted state.

#### Made Alive with Christ

(Eph. 2: 4-9)

*But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.* Verse 4 continues the idea which Paul introduced in verse 1, namely, that all Christians had been raised from death in trespasses and sins. This salvation from spiritual death was the result of God's unflinching mercy, and in order to satisfy his great love. In other words, the character of God made the salvation of the lost essential. It would have been wholly inconsistent with his nature to fail to provide a plan for man's redemption.

To be "alive" is the exact opposite of being "dead," but this life is to be experienced only in Christ. "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having for-

given us all our trespasses." (Col. 2: 12, 13.) Paul explains parenthetically that our salvation is due to the grace of God, and he further assures us that our being raised up has a high purpose, namely, "to sit with him in the heavenly places," that is, where God's blessings are to be found. (Cf. Eph. 1: 3; Phil. 3: 20; Col. 3: 1-4.) This is the present experience of every faithful child of God. The "ages to come" apparently refer to the successive ages of the Christian dispensation; and it is during those ages that the grace of God is to be displayed in his actual benefits to his people. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28; Phil. 4: 6, 7, 19; Heb. 13: 5, 6; 1 John 3: 1-3.) "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." (Rom. 8: 32.)

For *by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory.* This is a further elaboration of salvation by grace, introduced in verse 5. Our salvation is the gift of God. It was provided, or made possible, by "the grace" (original) on God's part, and was received or appropriated through faith on our part. Grace, then, and not faith, is the ground or procuring cause of salvation. (Cf. Heb. 5: 8, 9.) "The grace," as used in the passage now before us, is equivalent to *the gospel*, and the emphasis is on God's part with reference to our salvation. Salvation is his gift to the sinner.

But the qualifying phrase "*through faith*" must not be overlooked; for it is just as much a part of the text as is the portion with reference to grace. Salvation for the lost is provided and offered by God's *grace*; it is received and appropriated by man's *faith*. "Through faith" shows that we have access to the salvation which God alone is able to provide. (Cf. Rom. 5: 1, 2.)

"*And that not of yourselves.*" There is a simple rule of grammar which says that "that" refers to the thing which is farther away, while "this" has reference to that which is closer. Accordingly, in the passage now before us, that refers to grace, not to faith. It is grace, rather than faith, which is the ground or procuring cause of our salvation.

"*Not of works, that no man should glory.*" (Cf. "not of yourselves" in verse 8.) There was nothing which we did or could do to make possible our salvation. We can only accept by faith that which was provided or made possible by God's grace. "Works" as used in this verse refers to *meritorious works* or works which, in and of themselves, procure the desired end. But the passage we are now discussing declares that our salvation did not proceed from ourselves, or from anything which we did; and there is therefore no ground for glorying or boasting on our part. (Cf. Tit. 3: 5, 6; Rom. 3: 27, 28.) When Paul says that salvation is the gift of God, he does not mean that it is unconditional; if that were true, then "through faith" would have no meaning. Salvation is indeed a gift, but it always takes two to perfect a gift—one to make the offer, and another to accept it. (Cf. Josh. 6: 2f; Matt. 22: 1-14; Heb. 5: 8, 9.) So, instead of doing anything to make possible our salvation, God's people are themselves his workmanship, that is, they were created by him. (Cf. Verse 10; 2 Cor. 5: 17.) They were created to do the works which God has ordained for them. (See Phil. 2: 12, 13.)

### The Appearance and Purpose of God's Grace

(Tit. 2: 11-14)

For the grace of *God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.* It has already been pointed out that the grace of God is his merciful kindness which is extended to sinners, and it was manifested in his Son, that is, Christ is the embodiment of God's grace which is presented to mankind through the gospel. Therein lies the force of the term "appeared." The same original word is found in Acts 27: 20. "And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days." The sun and stars existed, but the clouds had prevented their being seen. The grace of God was revealed, appeared, or was made manifest with the coming of Christ, just as the sun and

stars are seen when the clouds are moved out of the way.

We learn from the passage now before us that the grace of God is something which may be manifested, and which can be both recognized and understood by those to whom it appears. "Since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth." (Col. 1: 6b.) "Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God." (Acts 11: 23.) It is possible for people to continue in or stand fast in the grace of God. "Who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God." (Acts 13: 43b.) "I have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein." (1 Pet. 5: 12b.) Those who fail to respond to God's grace are said to fall short of it. "Looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God." (Heb. 12: 15a.)

Paul tells us that the grace of God had appeared, "bringing salvation to all men." This means that there is no respect of persons with God, and that no man need be lost, so far as God is concerned. "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.) "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.) Provisions therefore have been made for all peoples. "But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man." (Heb. 2: 9.)

But the grace which brings salvation is also a teacher: "instructing us," (1) that there is something which must be denied, that is, renounced or forsaken; and the aorist participle by which this is expressed has the force of denying *once for all*. That which is to be denied is plainly stated: (a) "ungodliness," that is, a want of reverence toward God. (Thayer.) There are too many people who fail to show the proper re-

gard for God and his word, (b) "Worldly lusts," that is, things which have the character of this corrupt age—a desire for that which is forbidden. (Cf. 1 John 2: 15-17; James 4: 4.) This is the spirit which brought about the downfall of Eve in the garden of Eden.

The grace of God also teaches (2) the way we should live: (a) "soberly," that is, one's duty to himself, and it is done by exercising self-control, (b) "Righteously," treating our fellow men as we should, (c) "godly," showing the proper respect for God. (3) The sphere of our activities—"in this present world." The things which the grace of God teaches constitute our duty here and now. This passage contains one of the most impressive epitomes of Christianity on record: "instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world."

*Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.* As an incentive to faithfulness to the Lord, we are to look for that which has been promised at the end of the way. This is the way that Paul himself felt about the matter, as may be seen by reading his benediction in his last letter to Timothy. (See 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.)

Verse 14 gives the motive which prompted Christ to make his great sacrifice, and also what he expects of those who have been redeemed. People who have been saved by grace are expected to perform the works which their Benefactor has ordained for them. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2: 10.) "So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2: 12, 13.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What is the general attitude toward our subject for today? Why?  
What differences of opinion are held regarding it?  
What do the Scriptures say regarding the question?  
What is always the basis of different opinions concerning salvation by grace?  
What, then, is vital before trying to explain the subject?

### The Golden Text

Why was Noah made the object of God's grace?  
What is the primary meaning of the term "grace"?  
What were the two sides involved in the salvation of Noah?  
Why was it necessary for Noah to act, if God saved him by grace?

Deal through Trespasses and Sins

Why did Paul introduce the question of raising the people from the dead?  
What does it mean for one to be dead through trespasses and sins?  
What is meant by "trespasses" and "sins"?  
What did Paul say regarding the previous sinful life?  
Who inspired such a life?  
How is the condition related to "essential worldliness"?  
In what way were they by nature the children of wrath? Does that condition still prevail?  
Give reason for your answer.

### Made Alive with Christ

In what way are verses 4 and 1 related?  
What is the great motive behind the salvation of sinners?  
What does it mean for one to be made "alive"?

Where only may this life be had?  
What parenthetical statement does Paul make regarding our salvation?  
For what purpose are people raised up from spiritual death?  
What does it mean to sit with him in heavenly places?  
In what way is this experience related to people now?  
What "ages to come" are referred to by Paul?  
In what way does God show his great blessings to his people today?  
What further word does Paul give concerning salvation by grace?  
What is God's gift to his people?  
What, then, is the basis of our salvation?  
What is the significance of "through faith"?  
What is "not of yourselves"?  
What "works" are meant? and how "no man should glory"?  
If salvation is the gift of God, what about any conditions?

### The Appearance and Purpose of God's Grace

In what sense did the grace of God appear?  
Give some scriptural facts regarding God's grace.  
What did the grace of God bring when it appeared?  
What is implied by the expression "all men"?  
Does this teach that all men will be saved? Give reasons for your answer.  
What does the grace of God teach the saved?  
What does it mean to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts?  
What does it mean to live soberly and righteously and godly? and where?  
What incentive to faithfulness does Paul mention?  
What motive prompted Christ to make his great sacrifice?

## Lesson VII—August 13, 1961

### AN EXAMPLE OF CONVERSION

#### Lesson Text

#### Acts 8:26-40

26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Je-ru'-sa-lem unto Ga'-za: the same is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and behold, a man of £-thi-6'-pi-a, a eunuch of great authority under Can-da'-ce, queen of the E-thi-o'-pi-ans, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Je-ru'-sa-lem to worship;

28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet I-sa'-iah.

29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading I-sa'-iah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;

And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,

So he openeth not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:

His generation who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?

35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Je'-sus.

36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and

the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at A-zo'-tus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caes-a-re'-a.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." (Acts 18: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 46, 47.

### Daily Bible Readings

- August 7. M.....The Church Scattered (Acts 8: 1-4)
- August 8. T.....Work of Philip in Samaria (Acts 8: 5-12)
- August 9. W.....The Great Commission (Mark 16: 15, 16; Matt. 28: 18-20)
- August 10. T.....Action of Baptism (Rom. 6: 1-6)
- August 11. F.....Christ's Baptism (Matt. 3: 13-17)
- August 12. S.....Obedience Essential (2 Thess. 1: 1-9)
- August 13. S.....Blessings of Obedience (Matt. 7: 21-29)

TIME.—Probably about A.D. 32.

PLACE.—On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

PERSONS.—An angel, the Spirit, Philip, and the eunuch.

### Introduction

The Book of Acts may very properly be called a book of conversions, and it is reasonable to suppose that that part of God's word contains that which he wants people to know about the subject. There is, of course, information on the question in other parts of the New Testament, but it is in the Book of Acts that one may find the most detailed account of the subject. Just before Jesus left his disciples to return to the Father, he gave what is called the Great Commission; and every case of conversion which is recorded in the Book of Acts was worked out according to the term of that commission. The Lord's commission to his disciples, therefore, should be carefully studied in connection with this subject.

There is no better way of making plain any proposition than by effective illustration. Not only does the writer of the Book of Acts give examples of conversion — examples which took place under the preaching of inspired men; he gives a variety of examples which illustrate how the

conversion of men and women was accomplished under various and sundry conditions. The attending circumstances often differed widely; but it is a fact capable of demonstration that in every case those who were converted to the Lord did exactly that which is set forth in the Great Commission—no more, no less.

The term "convert" literally means *to turn*, and it follows that when one is converted to God he turns to God. This view makes the process active, rather than passive; or to state the same thing in other words, the sinner must himself do something, rather than simply having something done to him. A comparison of the King James Version with the American Standard will illustrate this difference. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3: 19a, KJV.) "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out." (Ibid., ASV.) (Cf. Acts 11: 21.)

Every case of genuine conversion

is a twofold process: God's part and man's part. This truth was clearly pointed out in our last lesson. "For by grace [God's part] have ye been saved through *faith*" [man's part]. (Eph. 2: 8a.) There are three things accomplished, or three specific changes made, in every case of New Testament conversion, namely, (1) a change of heart; (2) a change in life; and (3) a change in relationship. The plan of salvation, or the scheme of redemption, which God has ordained meets each of these needs.

Faith changes the heart; repentance changes the life; and baptism changes the state or relationship.

The case of the Ethiopian eunuch, the example which we are to consider today, is one of the clearest illustrations in the Book of Acts of the manner in which the Divine and the human perform their parts in the process of conversion. It shall be our purpose in this lesson to consider carefully that which each did, and thereby distinguish between the human and the Divine.

### The Golden Text

*"And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."* Those who read the accounts of the commission, as indicated in the devotional reading for today, will see that Jesus authorized the gospel to be preached to all men, and promised salvation to all who will believe the message proclaimed, repent of their sins, and are baptized. This is the gospel which Paul preached in Corinth, and Luke, in the passage which serves as the golden text for this lesson, recorded the action of many of the people of that city.

While most people who regard the Bible as God's word readily admit that people must believe if they are to be saved, there are many who seek to minimize baptism. They usually cite Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 1: 17 in an effort to prove that baptism is non-essential: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." It would be interesting to know how Paul could have preached the gospel which Christ authorized to be preached, without preaching baptism; and it remains a fact that in the very context of the passage just quoted the apostle plainly says that the Corinthian brethren did exactly what Luke said they did. (See also 1 Cor. 12: 13: "For in one Spirit

*were we all baptized into one body.")*

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul spoke of some who "would pervert the *gospel of Christ*," which means to alter it or change it up. Goodspeed renders the passage 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." That which has just been said regarding the attitude of many with reference to baptism is a good example of this very thing. The New Testament says, "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." But men say, "He that believeth is saved. He may be baptized later, if he so desires; but he is saved before and without water baptism." There is no excuse for any one to be deceived with reference to these things; for the New Testament on these points cannot be misunderstood. (See Gal. 1: 6-10; 1 Pet. 4: 11; 2 John 9.)

### The Text Explained

#### Philip's Mission to the Eunuch

(Acts 8: 26-29)

*But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. "An angel of the Lord" literally means a messenger of the Lord. The artist's conception of an angel is usually that of*

a white being, with golden hair and long wings. But in the Bible sense of the term, an angel is simply a messenger, one who is sent. An angel could and did take the form of a human being. (Cf. Heb. 13: 2.) The angel in the case now before us represented the Divine side in the conversion of the eunuch, and his task was to bring the preacher and

the man to be converted together. The angel did not say a single word to the eunuch; and, so far as the eunuch knew, the angel had no part in his conversion.

The angel's instruction was to "arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert." Philip was probably in Samaria when the angel spoke to him, and if so, he was about thirty-six miles north of Jerusalem. His instruction was to travel toward the south until he came to the road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza, on the seacoast, southwest of Jerusalem. (See map.) The "desert" probably referred to a portion of the road which passed through an uninhabited section of the country. There are some, however, who think that the reference was to an older town (Gaza) which had been deserted, in contrast with the newer and inhabited city by the same name.

*And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.* This eunuch was probably a Jew, in the service of the queen of his adopted country, and had been to Jerusalem to worship on the occasion of one of the annual feasts of the Jews. The fact that he was a eunuch would keep him from mingling with the Jewish congregation, or from entering into the court of the temple which was reserved for them; but it would not keep him from the court of the Gentiles. (See Deut. 23: 1.) Many Jews held posts of great responsibility in Gentile nations during the period of their history. (Cf. Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, et al.)

Philip promptly obeyed the voice of the angel; and when he reached the road which ran from Jerusalem to Gaza, he saw this man of Ethiopia, who had been to Jerusalem to worship, but who was then returning to his home; and who was reading the prophet Isaiah as he rode along in his chariot. But when Philip reached that road, he had done all that he had been told to do by the angel; and this brings us to the

second agent on the Divine side in the conversion of the eunuch.

*And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.* The part which the Holy Spirit performed in this conversion is told in this single sentence. He did not tell Philip to do anything else, so far as the record goes; for he knew that when a man of Philip's evangelistic zeal came face to face with an opportunity like this, he would preach Jesus unto him. That was what he had been doing in Samaria. (See Acts 8: 5.) The Holy Spirit did not say a word to the man to be converted. Like the angel, his part was to get the man and the preacher together. There is not, in fact, a single example in all the New Testament in which the Holy Spirit, or anyone representing the Divine side of the question, ever dealt directly with a sinner in an effort to convert him. True it is that the Lord spoke to Saul of Tarsus, but the purpose was that he might hear the words of the man sent to him and so learn what to do to be saved. The instruction of the Spirit to Philip brings to an end the work which was done by the agents of the Divine side in the conversion of the eunuch.

### He Preached unto Him Jesus

(Acts 8: 30-35)

*And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one should guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.* It is well to keep in mind that Philip was not an apostle in the sense that the twelve were. He was one of the seven who were appointed by the apostles to look after the needs of the Grecian widows (Acts 6: 1-6), and he is specifically called an *evangelist* (Acts 21: 8). An evangelist is a herald of the gospel message, the message which was first made known by the inspired apostles of Christ. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.)

When Philip saw that he was being directed to the man in the chariot which he saw going along the road, he lost no time in making contact with the man who was riding in it. And when he was close enough to see and hear what the man was doing,

he endeavored to make contact with him. The question which he asked was courteous, and the reply was polite. It is never difficult for the bearer of the good news and the man who is in need of its message to get together, when they manifest the sincerity which characterized these two men.

Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
 And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,  
 So he openeth not his mouth:  
 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:  
 His generation who shall declare?  
 For his life is taken from the earth.

The particular part of Isaiah which the eunuch was reading was what we know as 53: 7f. Philip, of course, knew nothing of the man he was then meeting, but he knew that he could soon find out by asking a simple question. If the man understood that the scripture referred to Christ, then Philip would know that he was a believer; but if he did not understand it in that light, he would know that he was not a believer; for this is probably one of the most significant passages in the Book of Isaiah to make known just where a man stands with reference to Christ. This situation must have filled the heart of Philip with glorious anticipation, and it is another of the many examples of God's providential working in leading men to Christ.

*And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.* The eunuch's question gave Philip a clear view of just what was needed by way of teaching, and he needed no other text as a beginning point. He could begin with the very scripture which was in the eunuch's mind, and preach unto him Jesus; for that was what the man needed to hear. How much is condensed in this statement! How much is implied in these words of the inspired text! *He preached unto him Jesus!* (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 1, 2.)

But the question naturally arises, What would a man preach to another man, if he preached unto him Jesus? He would tell of his coming into the world, and of the principal events in his life, climaxing them with the significance of his death, burial, and resurrection. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) These are the fundamental facts of the gospel, and no one can preach Jesus who does not emphasize them. He would then tell of his ascension back to the Father, and of the provisions which he made so that men might enjoy the salvation which he had made possible. (See Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 46, 47; Acts 2: 36-39.) He would also tell of the promises which Jesus made to all who obey the gospel, which include (1) the remission of sins, (2) the gift of the Holy Spirit, and (3) eternal life to all who are faithful to him until death. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 4.)

### The Results Which Followed the Sermon

(Acts 8: 36-40)

*And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* The eunuch gave evidence of his desire to know the truth, and he listened to Philip earnestly with an open mind. (Cf. John 7: 17; Acts 17: 11.) He believed that which was preached unto him, as his subsequent actions show. (See Rom. 10: 17; cf. Acts 16: 29-34.) He translated his faith unto action, that is, he did that which Jesus commands people to do, if they would enjoy the salvation which he has to offer. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19; Acts 2: 38-41.) The only way that the eunuch could have learned anything about baptism was from Philip's preaching; and it has already been pointed out that no one can preach Jesus, without saying something about the place which that subject had in the life of Jesus and in his final instructions to his disciples before they began their work of evangelizing the world.

It should be noted that verse 37 is omitted from the American Standard Version. This does not mean that what the King James Version says did not take place, namely, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that

Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It only means that Luke did not record it. McGarvey says, "In regard to scarcely any reading are the textual critics more unanimously agreed, or on better manuscript evidence, than the rejection of this verse as an interpolation." The very fact that an interpolator inserted the words, and especially in the light of such scriptures as Rom. 10: 9, 10; 1 Tim. 6: 13; Matt. 16: 16, strongly indicates that the practice was prevalent in apostolic days.

*And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.* McGarvey notes that it is impossible to frame a sentence in English or in Greek which could more unmistakably declare the fact that previous to the baptism of the eunuch

both he and Philip went down into the water, and that after the baptism they came up out of it. The baptism therefore took place between the going down into the water and the coming up out of the water; and in the light of the meaning of the word and the teaching of the Scriptures, it can mean only immersion. (Cf. Rom. 6: 3, 4.) The removal of Philip from the scene may have been miraculous; but whether it was or not, the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. It is a fact worthy of notice that no man in the New Testament days, following the Lord's ascension, ever rejoiced because of the forgiveness of his sins until after he was baptized.

*But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.* Azotus was the Old Testament city of Ashdod, and Caesarea was the home of Philip. (See Acts 21: 8.)

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What is the principal purpose of the Book of Acts?  
How is conversion related to the great commission?  
Why so many cases of conversion recorded in the Book of Acts?  
What is peculiar to all of them?  
What is the meaning of the term "convert"?  
What twofold process is found in every case of conversion? Explain.  
What three things are always accomplished in conversion? How?  
What important lesson do we get from the conversion of the eunuch?

#### The Golden Text

In what way does the golden text emphasize our lesson for today?  
Why do so many people try to get rid of baptism as a condition of pardon?  
What important lesson did Paul give on this question?  
Show how some people try to alter the gospel.

#### Philip's Mission to the Eunuch

What is meant by "an angel of the Lord"? For what purpose was the angel sent to Philip?  
Discuss the instruction which he gave to Philip.  
What is the significance of the term "desert"?  
What principal facts are given regarding the eunuch?  
Why would he be going to Jerusalem to worship from so great a distance?

What all did the angel instruct Philip to do?  
Why was it necessary for the Spirit to speak to him?  
What important lesson do we learn from this circumstance?

#### He Preached unto Him Jesus

Just who was this Philip about whom we are studying?  
What did he do in response to the Spirit's message to him?  
Why did he ask the eunuch about his understanding?  
What shows that the question was in order?  
Why is it so easy for two men like these to get together?  
What was the scripture which he was reading?  
What would Philip know regarding him, if he knew something about his understanding?  
Why did that make a suitable text for Philip to use as a beginning point?  
What does it mean for one to preach Jesus?  
Give some of the principal points which such preaching emphasizes.

#### The Results Which Followed the Sermon

What attitude did the eunuch manifest as he listened to Philip?  
Why would the sight of water cause him to want to be baptized?  
Why is it necessary to preach baptism in preaching Jesus?  
Why is verse 37 omitted from the American Standard Version?  
Why is it probably in the King James Version?  
What happened before and after the eunuch's baptism?

What, then, must have been the act performed in baptism?  
 What happened to Philip and the eunuch after the latter's baptism?

When and why did the eunuch rejoice?  
 Where was Philip next found? and what was he doing?  
 Where did he live?

### Lesson VIII—August 20, 1961

## IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

### Lesson Text

**Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16; Eph. 1: 22, 23; 4: 4-6, 11-16**

18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Ha-des shall not prevail against it.

16 Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you.

22 And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

11 And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some,

evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;

15 But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, *even* Christ;

16 From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in *due* measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.*" (Acts 2: 47.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 4: 26-32.

### Daily Bible Readings

August 14. M.....	Foundation of the Church (Matt. 16: 13-20)
August 15. T.....	Church and Salvation (Acts 2: 38-47)
August 16. W.....	Church, the Body of Christ (Eph. 1: 15-22)
August 17. T.....	Worship of the Church (John 4: 1-24)
August 18. F.....	Members of the Church (1 Cor. 12: 12-27)
August 19. S.....	Building Up the Church (Eph. 4: 11-16)
August 20. S.....	Obligation of the Church (Acts 6: 1-7)

TIME.—Matthew, probably A.D. 29; Romans, A.D. 58; Ephesians, A.D. 62.

PLACES.—Matthew, Caesarea Philippi; Romans was written in Corinth; Ephesians, in Rome.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and those to whom he wrote.

### Introduction

The last two and one half centuries of the Christian era have been pre-eminently characterized by religious denominations and denominationalism; and this condition has resulted

in great confusion with reference to the New Testament meaning and use of the term "church." There are but few people today, as a matter of fact, who always and under all circum-

stances employ the term in its strictly scriptural sense. The great majority of people are constantly using the word in senses which are wholly foreign to the New Testament sense.

The confusion regarding the meaning and use of the word church grows out of the common and not altogether unnatural tendency of men to form their conception of Bible terms, not from the Bible itself, but from the circumstances and usages which are current among the people around them. The average person seems to regard his religious environment as the criterion for determining the contents of the Bible; but if one will only stop and familiarize himself with the Scriptures, he will soon see that there is often a wide difference between that which is actually in the Bible and the present-day religious thinking.

The Greek word for church is

### The Golden Text

*"And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved."* The church of the New Testament had its origin on the day of Pentecost, following the Lord's ascension. Some of the material which went into the church, such as the apostles and others who followed Jesus while he was on earth, was prepared under John's commission; but the church as such did not become a living organism until Pentecost; for it was on that day that the Spirit entered the body. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; Eph. 2: 22.) It is always true that "the body apart from the Spirit is dead." (See 1 Cor. 12: 13; John 7: 37-39; James 2: 26.)

If any one will take the time to read the world-wide commission which Christ gave to his disciples, and the first two chapters of Acts, he will see that the work of calling people from sin unto salvation under Christ did not begin until the Pentecost already referred to. All the people who accepted Jesus as Christ and Lord were grouped together, so to speak, and became the "church of Christ," or, which is the same thing, *the saved ones of Christ*. These people are also called the "body" of Christ, that is, the body of people over which he is head (Eph. 1: 22, 23); and the New Testament boldly affirms that in none other is there salvation (Acts

*ekklesia*—from *ek*, out, and *kaleo*, to call or summon. This word was not coined by Christ or the apostles, but was in general use by the Greek speaking people during the time of Christ's earthly ministry. The term never had any religious significance among the Greeks. It literally meant the *called-out ones* or an assembly; and it was applied to any body of people who were called out and gathered together for any purpose. There is nothing about the word itself which indicates the character of the assembly. It could be religious or otherwise. Twice the term was applied to the mob in Ephesus, once to the proconsular court, and once to the congregation of Israel in the wilderness. (See Acts 19: 32, 39, 41; 7: 38.) Thus, the *kind* of church must always be determined by the context. Other terms and circumstances must decide whether the reference is to a church of God or a church of men.

4: 12). Christ alone is the Saviour of men, and those who are saved are his body.

The closing part of the second chapter of Acts records something of the growth of the church, beginning with Pentecost, that is, its beginning. The gospel in its fullness was preached for the first time on that day, and people were told what they must do in order to be saved. The careful student will note that those asking what to do had heard Peter's sermon, and were pricked in their heart, which means that they believed that which he had said. Peter's reply to them was, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls." That was the way people were saved; and as the process continued, "the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved," that is, the church. (See the King James Version.)

There was a church of the Lord in Jerusalem first, and then later on

in other parts of the country; and if any one doubts that the church and the saved were one and the same thing, then let him take a New Testament, the only authentic history of the early church, and go to any place where there was a church and find a single person who was saved, or

a Christian, but was not a member of the church. A child of God in that day might not have been a member of a particular congregation (the eunuch of Acts 8, for example); but if he was a Christian he was a member of the Lord's body, which is the church. (Cf. Eph. 5: 23.)

## The Text Explained

### The Church Is the Lord's

(Matt. 16: 18; Rom. 16: 16)

*And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.* This statement was made by Jesus in response to Peter's confession that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. He and his disciples were in the parts of Caesarea Philippi, at the foot of Mount Hermon, the most northern point mentioned in the travels of Jesus. His ministry, so far as the multitudes were concerned, was almost over, and the principal task which remained for him to accomplish before his crucifixion was the training and perfecting of the disciples who had followed him, before they were sent to carry his message to the world. The full context is as follows, and from it we can see the progress the disciples had made.

"Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ." (Matt. 16: 13-20.)

This is the first time the term "church" is found in the New Testament; and it is used to describe something which Jesus said that he was going to build. Furthermore, he refers to it as "my church." Paul, in speaking of the same thing, as he addressed the Ephesian elders, said, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased [acquired, margin] with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) The blood of Christ, which was shed in his death, made possible the salvation of all men (cf. Heb. 2:9); and those who were willing to take advantage of his offer were saved from their sins, and were formed into a body which Jesus called his church.

This church was built upon the solid rock of truth which Peter confessed. The fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, fully qualified him to be the Saviour of the world; and all who heed his call are separated from the sinful world, and become the body over which he rules as head. "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.) The church and the world therefore are diametrically opposed to each other; and every one who is cleansed from his sins, which is the same thing as being delivered from the evil one, is translated into the kingdom (the same as the church) of God's Son. (See Col. 1: 13.) This is the Lord's way of wresting the rule of the world from Satan, and returning it to God. (Cf. Matt. 28: 18-20; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.)

*All the churches of Christ salute you.* The term "churches" is used here in the sense of congregations in various sections of the country. A similar use of the term is found in 1 Cor. 11: 16: "the churches of

God." There were churches in Galatia, and seven such congregations are listed in Asia. (See Gal. 1: 2; Rev. 1: 4.)

### The Church Is a United Body

(Eph. 4: 4-6)

*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.* The emphasis here is on the church, the body of Christ; and what is said grew out of the exhortation to give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The real meaning of all this can be better seen by studying Colossians and Ephesians together. In Colossians Paul placed the emphasis upon the preeminence of Christ as the head of all things, especially the church; and in doing so he set forth the grandest and fullest conception of the purpose and work of Christ which is known to us.

But in Ephesians the apostle shifted the emphasis somewhat and centered the attention of his readers upon the place and purpose of the church, the body of Christ, as the medium through which the eternal purpose of God is made known (3: 10), and through which he is to receive glory from his redeemed creatures (3:20, 21). As Paul viewed the matter in Ephesians, God's eternal purpose is to gather into one body the whole created universe, and thereby restore harmony, both between the creatures themselves, and between them and himself as their Creator. The apostle's prayers were for that glorious consummation; and in order that they might achieve that goal, his whole endeavor was that they might have at full and clear knowledge of the eternal purpose of God which he was working out through Christ Jesus, whom he gave "to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Everything, argued Paul as he reached the climax of this matchless document, centers in the purpose of God. All discord between the elements in the church—all distinction between Jew and Gentile—must yield to that grand purpose, if God's will

is to be done. "The vision is one of a great oneness in Christ and through him in God, a oneness of birth and faith and life and love, as men, touched with the fire of that Divine purpose, seek to fulfill, each in himself, the part that God has given him to play in the world, and, fighting against the foes of God, to overcome at last."

With this view of the matter, the church may be likened to a great spiritual melting-pot, in which all people who become members of it are made one in Christ Jesus. In summing up this great unity, Paul points out first of all that there is one body, namely, the church; and that it is animated by one Spirit. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12: 12, 13.)

Paul then goes on to show that all the members of the church have a common hope, are ruled over by one Lord, believe the same thing (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 10), were separated from the world and brought together by one baptism (see Gal. 3: 26, 27), with the result that we all have a common Father, "who is over all, and through all, and in all." No one can consider these stirring words about the meaning and nature of the church, without having his interest quickened with respect to its unity.

### The Method by Which This Unity Was Attained

(Eph. 4: 11-16)

*And he gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: This section of our lesson should be considered in the light of the verses which immediately precede it. "But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith,*

When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive

And gave gifts unto men.

(Now this, He ascended, what is it but

that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)" Being the ascended Christ, according to the Scriptures, and now the head of the church, the Lord had the right to bestow the gifts which are listed in verse 11. (Cf. Eph. 1: 22, 23.)

The apostles were Christ's plenary representatives whose function it was to make known his will to men; and as such they could have no successors. (See 1 Cor. 2: 9, 10; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20; Matt. 19: 28.) Their authority and tenure of office are co-extensive with the reign of Christ, or, which is the same thing, the Christian dispensation. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.) The *prophets* were the inspired preachers of the message which had been made known by the apostles; and their work was limited to that period before the word was reduced to writing for general use. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8; 2 Cor. 3: 16, 17.)

The evangelists were heralds of the truth which had been revealed, and during the time before it was available in written form for general use, they were supplied with gifts which fitted them to go into places where the word had not been preached and proclaim and confirm it. (Cf. Mark 16: 17, 18; 1 Tim. 4: 14.) They appeared to have been the missionaries of the early church. But the proclamation of the truth is just as necessary in our day, as it was in the time when the will of God was being made known for the first time. The only difference is that the evangelists do not need inspiration now. (Cf. 2. Tim. 2: 2.)

It is possible that the *pastors* and

*teachers* refer to the same class, and if so, they were the elders or shepherds of the flock. We know from 1 Tim. 3 that both duties belong to those who have the oversight of the various congregations. But if the pastors were the shepherds, and the teachers were others, then the latter would serve under the elders. All of these probably enjoyed miraculous gifts during the time of miracles. But whatever may have been their status then, shepherds who can teach are as much in need now, as they were then. And if the teachers were different from the shepherds, they, too, are needed now. The purpose of these endowed ministries is plainly stated in verse 12.

*Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth, in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.* This passage gives the time of the miraculous ministry, and shows what the result will be when the perfect will of God was completed and revealed to his people. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8-10.) Such a condition is possible now, if every member of the church will only do his best.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What has been the general religious condition during the last two hundred and fifty years? and with what results?  
How do many people today endeavor to arrive at religious conclusions?  
What is the meaning of the term "church"?

#### The Golden Text

Give the facts concerning the beginning of the New Testament church.  
In what sense is the church the body of Christ?  
What is the relation of the saved to the church?

How are the saved added to the church?  
Is it possible for a man to be saved and not be a member of the church?  
Give reasons for your answer.

#### The Church Is the Lord's

Under what circumstances did Jesus promise to build his church?  
Why did he speak of the church as "my church"?  
What price did he pay for his church?  
What is the foundation upon which it is built?  
In what sense is Christ the head of the church?  
How is the church related to the world?  
How does Christ propose to wrest the rule of the world from Satan?

How long will the kingdom of Christ continue?  
In what sense did Paul use the expression "churches of Christ"?

In what way is God related to the church?

**The Method by Which This Unity Was Attained**

**The Church Is a United Body**  
What called forth Paul's statement regarding the seven "ones"?  
What was he emphasizing?  
What is the best way to understand the apostle's meaning?  
What was Paul's general purpose in writing "Ephesians"?  
What did he say God's great purpose is?  
How only can that purpose be realized?  
In what sense is the church like a great spiritual melting-pot?  
Why say there is one Spirit?  
What is the relation of the Spirit to the body?  
Show what Paul meant by one hope, Lord, faith, and baptism.

Upon what basis did Christ give his gifts to his people?  
Who were the apostles and what was their function?  
Why can't they have successors?  
Why did the church need prophets?  
Who were the evangelists?  
Why does the church need evangelists today and not prophets?  
Who were the pastors and teachers?  
What does the New Testament say regarding the duties of pastors or shepherds?  
Why would the early shepherds need miraculous gifts?  
What was the purpose of all these gifts?  
How long were they to continue?  
What is expected of the church today?

**Lesson IX—August 27, 1961**

**THE LORD'S SUPPER**

**Lesson Text**

**Matt. 26: 26-29; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29; Acts 20: 7**

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, 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.

23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Je'-sus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread;

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 In like manner also the cup,

after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.

7 And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"This do in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 22: 14-23.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- August 21. M.....The Supper Instituted (Matt. 26: 17-30)
- August 22. T.....Details of the Supper (1 Cor. 11: 21-29)
- August 23. W.....Bread from Heaven (John 6: 41-51)
- August 24. T.....Supper a Memorial (Luke 22: 14-22)
- August 25. F.....Communion of the Supper (1 Cor. 10: 14-22;
- August 26. S.....Supper on First Day of Week (Acts 20: 7-12)
- August 27. S.....Christ Present When We Partake (Luke 22: 14-22)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Corinth, and Troas.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, Paul, the Corinthians, and the brethren at Troas.

### Introduction

The Lord's supper is a memorial institution which Jesus graciously gave to his followers. Its spiritual value to them cannot be overestimated. Its worth as a medium through which Christians may show their love and devotion to their Redeemer is beyond the computation of mortal men. No man could have been saved from eternal death, had it not been for the death of Christ; and he, accordingly, wants his people to be constantly aware of that truth. That is one of the primary purposes of the Lord's supper—a reminder to help us remember that which we ought not to forget.

This memorial feast has been referred to as a love-drenched reminder that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should have life in his Son, and that more abundantly. The Lord's supper is a magnificent reminder that God is; that Jesus died for our sins; that prayer is potent; that love is dynamic; and that faith is the victory. His enemies thought that they had destroyed Jesus when they crucified him and saw to it that he was dead before he was removed from the cross; but they didn't understand God's plan. Jesus was not defeated in his death, but arose to the greatest victory the world has ever seen. The Lord's supper also commemorates that crowning triumph.

In speaking of this great institution, Hall L. Calhoun said that Jesus wanted to be remembered by his followers. He wanted them to remem-

ber that he loved them well enough to have his body broken and his blood shed for them; and he counted on his love for them to bring about a corresponding love on their part for him. It is this that really gives value and significance to the Lord's supper. It proclaims in action that those partaking of it do believe that Jesus died for them. They therefore become witnesses to others of their faith in Jesus as their crucified Saviour and Lord; and as the testimony of two is stronger than that of one, so the testimony of the entire church on earth becomes the testimony of a great cloud of witnesses, the strength of which, if the church is faithful to its trust, will have a profound effect on the world about it.

When the lives of those who eat the Lord's supper are faithfully patterned after the life of their Lord, the strength and convincing power of their testimony is greatly increased; but when people become careless and indifferent regarding their lives, their witness when they partake of the memorial feast is greatly weakened, and often has the opposite effect from that which was intended. This is true because there is a contradiction between what they profess while they are around the table, and their own daily living. May the Lord therefore help us all to make an honest effort to see to it that our service in his cause may have its due force in the lives of those who are about us every day. This is our greatest duty to Christ.

### The Golden Text

This portion of our lesson is in the regular text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

### The Text Explained

#### The Lord's Supper Instituted

(Matt. 26: 26-29)

*As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all*

*of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.* We gather from the gospel narratives that the Lord's supper was instituted at the close of the passover supper. The leaders of the Jews were at that very time making plans for his death, and Judas had already bargained for

his betrayal. Although his disciples were close to him, they did not know and neither could they understand what was taking place within his heart. John says that Jesus was troubled in the spirit, and told them that one of their number would betray him. (See John 13: 21.)

And so in the midst of these solemn circumstances Jesus instituted the feast which would be celebrated by his disciples throughout the Christian dispensation. The bread which he used was from the passover feast; and since only unleavened bread could be used there, that was the kind which Jesus used for his supper. If Christian people today sincerely desire to please the Lord, they should have no trouble in deciding the nature of the elements which they know will be acceptable to him. After taking the bread, Jesus gave thanks for it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples to eat as representing his body which was offered, or would be within a few hours.

Following the eating of the bread, Jesus gave his disciples the cup, after he had given thanks for it. The original word for "gave thanks" is *eucharisteo* from which we have "*eucharist*," sometimes, though incorrectly, used as a name for the supper. Jesus *blessed* the bread, but *gave thanks* for the cup, however, the two expressions apparently have the same practical meaning. (Cf. Luke 22: 19.) Where Matthew says, "Drink ye all of it," Mark has, "And they all drank of it." This shows that all the disciples at the table drank of the fruit of the vine, and not that they drank all that was in the cup.

It should also be noted that the "cup" is put for the contents; for it is obvious that they only drank that which was in the cup, rather than the cup itself. This is also made plain in 1 Cor. 10: 14-22. Regardless of the number of containers which may be used, there is still only one cup; for only the fruit of the vine can represent the blood of Jesus. And when all Christians drink of that which symbolizes the blood of Christ, they are all drinking of the one cup. The same thing, of course, is true of the bread—there is only one bread which stands for his body. The covenant referred to is the one which

was spoken of prophetically by Jeremiah (31: 31-34), and quoted and commented on by Paul in Heb. 8: 6-13.

The elements of which this supper is composed are among the most perishable of earth, and yet they have stood the test of nearly two thousand years. This is significant, as well as the motive for instituting the supper. In the words of A. B. Bruce, "He seems to say, 'Fix your eyes on Calvary and watch what happens there. This is the great event in my earthly history. Other men have monuments, because they have lived lives deemed memorable. I wish you to erect a monument to me, because I have died. The memory of other men is cherished by their birthdays, but in my case better is the day of my death than the day of my birth. My birth into the world was momentous, but still more is my death. Of my birth no festive commemoration is needed; but of my death keep alive the memory till I come again. Remembering it you remember all, for of all it is the secret, the consummation and the crown.'"

This is true because the death of Christ was a sacrificial death. The paschal lamb of the Jewish passover was sacrificed as a call to remembrance of that night when the destroying angel *passed over* every house in Egypt whose lintel and doorposts were dyed with its blood. And in a similar manner, Jesus was the Paschal Lamb of God, whose shed blood was to deliver the human race from a deeper slavery than that of Egypt. "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." These are the truths which this supper was meant to proclaim; and it was to enshrine that faith and deepen it into adoring love and joyful assurance that Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me."

*But I say unto you, 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. This was a confident anticipa-*

tion of his triumph over death. With the raising of the cross on the next day, it would appear that evil had succeeded in its effort to destroy the Galilean teacher; but with calm and unruffled confidence Jesus looked beyond the dark tomorrow, and saw the triumph of the kingdom which he had come to set up. And it was in that kingdom that he would drink a new and better cup with his disciples to celebrate his complete and final victory. McGarvey calls this the new method of drinking wine, which, of course, signifies his spiritual communion with his disciples in their celebration of the supper. Christ does not drink literal fruit of the vine in the kingdom, which was not established until after his ascension.

### Apostolic Instruction Regarding the Supper

(1 Cor. 11: 23-29)

For *I received of the Lord that which, also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, this is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.* The instruction which Paul gives in this section of our lesson was made necessary because of disorders in the Corinthian church in connection with the observance of the Lord's supper, as may be seen from the preceding verses:

"But in giving you this charge, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you. When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper: for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in: or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you?

shall I praise you? In this I praise you not."

In verse 2 of the chapter from which our text is taken, Paul had said, "Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you." But the apostle could not commend his Corinthian brethren for their conduct in connection with the supper. The meal which they had along with the Lord's supper was the *agape* or "love-feast." (Cf. Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2: 13.)

Paul begins his instruction regarding the Lord's supper by telling the Corinthians that he had received from the Lord that which he had taught them. Bible students are not agreed as to whether Paul meant to say that he received the information directly from the Lord himself, or whether it came to him from the Lord through other inspired apostles. But in view of Paul's statement to the Galatians, it appears that he intended to say that it came directly from the Lord to him. "For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1: 11, 12.)

After giving the source of his information, the apostle Paul relates the facts of the institution of the Lord's supper, just as the gospel narrators did, and then stated the purposes which Christians should keep in mind when they observe it. The Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of "transubstantiation," by which they contend that when the bread and the fruit of the vine are blessed, they actually and literally become the body and blood of the Lord. But the fallacy of that doctrine is obvious when one remembers that both Jesus and the elements of the supper were before the disciples when they ate the supper; and furthermore, they could see Jesus handling them, and they knew that they were eating bread and drinking the fruit of the vine. If Jesus had suddenly vanished from their sight when he made the statements regarding the bread and the fruit of the vine, there might have been some reason for the disciples' thinking that those elements

had been transformed into his literal body and blood. But Jesus was still there in their presence, and so were the bread and the fruit of the vine, which symbolize his body and his blood.

There are some specific purposes listed for which the supper was instituted for the Lord's people. (1) *It is commemorative.* "This do in remembrance of me." "This do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." The emphasis here seems to be this, Do this, not in order to remember me, but because you do remember me. Those who cherish his memory in their hearts will be happy to engage in this joyful celebration because they love their Lord. The continued service in this respect will, of course, keep alive their memory of Jesus; but that is not where the emphasis belongs.

It is also well to keep in mind that Christians do not keep this feast merely in memory of his death, although that feature of his experience is prominent. They are to eat the Lord's supper in memory of *Christ*, and that means more than his death. Those who have been saved from their sins, and who are sincerely trying to follow their Lord, are keenly conscious of Jesus as their Saviour. He indeed died for their sins and made possible their redemption, but he rose again for their justification. Therefore, in remembering Jesus we remember him as a living person, and all that which he did for our salvation.

*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.* (2) In addition to the supper's being commemorative, it is also *declarative*. The fact that Christ died for the sins of the world must be brought to the attention of the world, if men are to be saved; for apart from the shedding of his blood there is no remission of sins for anyone. The observance of this feast therefore is a powerful means of proclaiming this great doctrine of the atonement; and as we thus proclaim his death, we also look forward to his coming again and proclaim our faith in the certainty of that glorious event.

We learn from the preceding chapter on First Corinthians that there is

a third purpose in the Lord's supper, namely, *communion*. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread." (1 Cor. 10: 16, 17.) The marginal reading of "communion" is *participation in*; and since Christ has only one body and one blood, when people partake of that which symbolize them, they must, of necessity, become one with him. Phillips renders this passage in these words: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a very sharing in the blood of Christ? When we break the bread do we not actually share in the body of Christ? The very fact that we all share one bread makes us all one body."

The fourth purpose for which the Lord's supper was instituted is for the spiritual nourishment of his people. (Cf. John 6: 53-55.) This passage does not refer directly to the Lord's supper, but anyone who does that which Jesus commands partakes of the quality of his life, and is in a very real sense partaking of his flesh and blood.

*Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.* The reference here is not to a person who feels himself unworthy to eat the supper, but to those who partake in an unworthy manner. The difference is between an adjective and an adverb. This should make every person try to make certain that he is observing the supper in the proper manner. He can do this proving himself, and making sure that he discerns, that is, discriminates (see margin) between merely eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine, and in doing so in memory of Jesus. He should be conscious of the significance and sacredness of that which he is doing.

## The Time for Observing the Supper

### Acts 20: 7

And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. The only way in which anyone can do by faith that which is taught in the Bible is to obey a precept, follow an apostolic example, or act in accordance with a necessary inference. If nothing more had been said than "this do in remembrance of me," then congregations would have been at liberty to select their own time for observing the supper;

but since we have an example of the practice of the early church, with apostolic approval, we know that we can do by faith that which they did. And it is equally certain that no one can celebrate the feast by faith on any other day than the first day of the week. When Paul said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup," he was not discussing the *time* of the supper's observance, but was telling them *what* to do when they ate the supper. Those brethren knew *when* to eat the supper, but some of them were in gross error regarding the purpose and *manner* which should characterize their worship in this respect.

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What kind of an institution is the Lord's supper?  
Why does Jesus want his followers to remember him?  
What effect does one's personal life have in connection with the supper?

### The Lord's Supper Instituted

Under what circumstances was the Lord's supper instituted?  
What type of bread and drink should be used in its celebration?  
Describe the manner in which Christ and his disciples ate the supper.  
Why is this supper sometimes called the "eucharist"?  
In what sense did Christ use the term "cup" in connection with the feast?  
Does this imply that only one cup should be used? Give reason for your answer.  
What was the motive behind the institution of the supper?  
What can you say of the elements which are used in it?  
Why celebrate the death of Christ, rather than his birth?  
What did Jesus say regarding his drinking of the fruit of the vine?  
What did he mean by this statement?

### Apostolic Instruction Regarding the Supper

Why did Paul give this instruction regarding the supper?  
Discuss the condition in the church in Corinth over this question.  
Where did Paul get his information regarding this subject? Give reasons for your answer.  
How does Paul's account of the supper compare with the others?  
What is the doctrine of "transubstantiation"?  
How do you know that it is true or not true?  
What reasons are given for observing the Lord's supper?  
In what sense is it a commemorative institution?  
What do those who eat it declare?  
In what way do we have communion with Christ, and what is the result?  
What spiritual nourishment do we derive from the observance of the supper?  
What does Paul say regarding the manner of the supper's observance?  
Why do some people consider themselves "unworthy" to eat it?  
In what way may people eat and drink judgment unto themselves?

### The Time for Observing the Supper

How only may people eat the supper by faith?  
How do we know when the supper should be eaten?  
What did Paul mean by saying, "As often as ye eat and drink"?

## Lesson X—September 3, 1961

### PRAYER

#### Lesson Text

Matt. 6: 5-15; Eph. 5: 20; 1 Thess. 5: 16-18

5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that

they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest,

enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

7 And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gen<sup>l</sup>-tiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

20 Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

16 Rejoice always;

17 Pray without ceasing;

18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working."* (James 5: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 107: 23-31.

**Daily Bible Readings**

August 28. M.....	David's Prayer (Psalm 23)
August 29. T.....	Habakkuk's Prayer (Hab. 3: 1-19)
August 30. W.....	The Disciples' Prayer (Matt. 6: 9-15)
August 31. T.....	The Lord's Prayer (John 17)
September 1. F.....	A Prayer of Paul (Rom. 15: 30-33)
September 2. S.....	A Prayer of Abraham (Gen. 18: 23-33)
September 3. S.....	A Persistent Prayer (Luke 18: 1-8)

TIME.—Matthew, A.D. 27; Ephesians, A.D. 62; First Thessalonians, somewhere in the period of A.D. 50-52.

PLACES.—Matthew, probably Mount Hattin; Ephesians was written in Rome; First Thessalonians, in Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes; Paul and the Christians to whom he wrote.

**Introduction**

Those who are familiar with the Bible are aware of the fact that man's highest privilege is to hear God speak to him (through his revealed will); and his next highest privilege is to speak to God in prayer. It is natural for us to want to talk with those whom we love, and we have that privilege when we love God. The activity which we call prayer belongs to the very heart of religion. 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.

Some of our best Bible students have pointed out that no subject has greater prominence in the Bible than prayer, and yet many who read the Bible are growing more indifferent to its blessings and privileges. The

tendency of the times seems to be away from prayer. Nichol and Whiteside note that perhaps no one can be entirely free from his environments; but to keep this prayerless spirit of the present age from overwhelming us, let us diligently read the Bible, and thus associate with God and Christ and the praying men of God—and pray. Prayer is the very breath of the Christian.

The habit of prayer, and especially of secret prayer, is altogether in harmony with the general law of habit and the growth and development of human character. In no other religious exercise is one brought so near to God; and in no other service can he be so familiar with the Creator of his body and the Father and

Preserver of his spirit. Furthermore, it is a law of nature that one forms attachment to and for those with whom he associates, and even becomes like them in his character; and since this is true, it follows that no

other act of devotion is so favorable for the cultivation of godliness. Those therefore who have been most devoted to prayer, in its true sense, have always been the most pious and the happiest of men.

### The Golden Text

*"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working."* It is easy to see from that which has just been said that prayer is one of the most effective forces in the Christian's entire experience. But like many of the other great privileges which God has provided for his people, prayer has come to us with ideas and practices attached to it which are foreign to the Lord's purpose regarding it. These extra ideas and practices not only were not ordained by the Lord, but they actually keep many professed Christians from seeing the real meaning and power of prayer. Preconceived ideas regarding any subject have a tendency to keep one from seeing the truth regarding that subject. The question of prayer is no exception to this rule. It is very important therefore that we approach the subject of prayer with an open mind, if we are to get the real meaning of effective praying.

One of the common mistakes which is made with reference to prayer is to regard it primarily, if not altogether, as a matter of petition or asking for something. Petition is indeed a vital part of prayer; but it lacks

much of being all of it. There is much more to prayer than simply asking for something; and it is the purpose of this study to consider some of the more prominent aspects of the subject, so that our prayers may be in harmony with the declaration of the golden text.

In order for our prayers to be effective, there are certain ends which we must keep in mind; for be it remembered the text says, "The supplication of a *righteous man* availeth much in its working." The righteous man is one who seeks to do the will of God. (Cf. Psalm 119: 172; Matt. 3: 15.) The righteous man therefore will always seek to conform to God's will; will seek spiritual companionship; and will be characterized, as a result, by interior relaxation and serenity. Those who pray effectively must ever realize that God "is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think"; and being both wise and good, he will not fail to hear the prayers of his people, if they live before him as they should. This is the secret of effective praying.

### The Text Explained

#### The Divine Standard for Praying

(Matt. 6: 5-15)

*And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to, stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.* This type of praying is from the lips, rather than from the heart; and it is therefore wholly unacceptable to the Lord. (Cf. Matt. 15: 7, 8.) Such prayers furnish a forceful exhibition of outward and formal righteousness. The term "hypocrite" means a *pretender*, or one who seeks to make it appear that he is what he is not. The praying hypocrite pretends to give glory to God by means of his prayers, but in ac-

tual life, he *intends* to gain glory for himself; and that is his reward.

*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.* The nature of this prayer involves and springs from the secret devotions of the heart. The hypocrites were offering *private* prayers in public, in an effort to gain the eyes of men, but the Christian's aim must be to gain the ear of God. Prayer has been described as the sacred and reverent intercourse of the soul with God. God will never turn a deaf ear to such prayers by his children.

*And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for*

*their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.* God is omniscient; and it is for that reason that vain repetitions are out of place when addressing him. Tyndale rendered the passage before us, "When ye pray, bable not moche," while Bruce notes that the pagans thought that by endless repetitions and many words they could inform their gods as to their needs and weary them ("*fatigare deos*") into granting their requests. (Cf. 1 Kings 18: 26; Eccles. 7: 14.) This injunction does not prohibit repetition as such in prayer, but only *vain* or useless repetitions. (Cf. John 17: 14-16; Matt. 26: 44.)

After this manner therefore pray ye: *Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation,* but deliver us from the evil one. If Matt. 6: 9-13 and Luke 11: 1-4 refer to the same prayer, then Jesus gave this model prayer in response to a request from his disciples; but if they are not the same prayer, the language of the two occasions must have been spoken under similar circumstances.

It has already been pointed out that prayer is a vital part of every Christian's life; but one must be taught how to pray before he can enter into the spirit and service of acceptable prayer; and it was for this reason that Jesus gave this model prayer to his disciples. The few brief sentences of the prayer now before us have a hold upon mankind which few other forms of words have. The words which make up this prayer are used in some way by myriads of people every day.

The entire prayer in the American Standard Version of the New Testament contains only fifty-five words; but they embrace a condensed statement of the Lord's chief ideas about God and men, arranged in comprehensive sentences, the significance of which was already well understood by his disciples. An analysis of the prayer reveals a well-considered literary structure of three parts, namely, (1) the address; (2) three petitions pertaining to God; and (3)

three petitions pertaining to those offering the prayer. The prayer therefore is both brief and comprehensive; and it covers a wide range of human needs, as well as the relationship which should exist between God and men.

In considering the address—"Our Father who art in heaven"—we have the beginning point in prayer. All acceptable prayer must begin with a firm belief in God. (Cf. Heb. 11: 6.) This faith involves belief in the existence of God as the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, and belief in his faithfulness in rewarding all who seek after him. These two elements of faith may also be called "conviction" and "confidence"—conviction that there is such a God as the Bible claims, and confidence that he will do that which is just and good for them that obey him. He could not be a God of righteousness and do otherwise. (Cf. Heb. 6: 10; 10: 23.) No one can pray effectively who does not have this kind of attitude toward God. (Cf. James 1: 5-8.) The Fatherhood of God must be understood and respected by those who are acceptable to him.

One of the evidences of divine revelation which we find in this prayer is the fact that the first part of it is not a request for the needs of the petitioner, but is designed, rather, to establish a spiritual attitude. The very first petition, in fact, is intended to fix the thought of the one offering it on the greatness of God to whom he prays; for if a sense of his omnipotence is really stirred within the petitioner, then there is no petition which he has the right to express that would strain the capacity of his faith; and if the sense of his holiness is ruling within the praying disciple, he will not ask for any unworthy thing. Therefore, to acknowledge the holiness and supremacy of God is to put the praying person in the proper spiritual atmosphere so necessary to acceptable prayer. With this kind of attitude toward God, one is anxious for his kingdom to spread and his will to be done.

After the Christian has developed the proper attitude toward the heavenly Father, then he is in a position to request those things which he himself needs; and he begins by acknowledging his dependence upon God. It is doubtful if there are many

today in this country who have uttered the petition for bread for the day on the morning when they did not really know where it was coming from. But God knows our needs, and he has solemnly promised to supply them. (See Matt. 6: 24-34.) Forgiveness and freedom from temptation are also universal needs, and Jesus teaches his people to pray for them. Any child of God who comprehends the significance of this brief prayer, and prays accordingly, will not only be blessed with the necessities of life; but will also have a peace within his heart which passes all understanding. It is hardly necessary to say that since the death, resurrection, and coronation of Christ, all acceptable prayers must be in his name. (Cf. John 16: 23, 24; 14: 13, 14; 15: 16.)

*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* This passage shows that there is a condition to be met in connection with the petition for forgiveness. The words are too plain to be misunderstood. And while this is the only petition in the prayer with a condition specifically stated, yet the naming of the condition should also illustrate the same principle as it applies to the other petitions for ourselves. For example, God will not give us our daily bread, if we are unwilling to do our part; and he will not deliver us from temptation and evil, if we deliberately walk into them. God has promised to do his part, but there is also a responsibility which rests upon us.

#### Prayer with Thanksgiving (Eph. 5: 20)

*Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.* The injunction here involves faith on the part of God's children. Paul says, "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.) If people really believe this, then there is nothing which can happen to them for which they cannot give thanks. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your

requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

It frequently happens that children of God, in facing and enduring many difficult situations which are incident to this life, stand in need of divine encouragement. When Jesus was outlining the work for his people to do, he promised them his cooperation and support. (See Matt. 28: 19, 20.) And when that scripture is read in connection with such passages as Rom. 8: 18-30, it is easy to see that the believer has the assurance of ultimate victory, along with whatever he needs to sustain him through whatever may come to him in this sojourn. (Cf. Rom. 8: 31, 32.)

Paul does not say that all things are good, but that all things work together for the ultimate good. The apostle does not ignore nor belittle the disorder and evil which exist in this world; he concedes that things are not as they should be; but he asks that we postpone sentence upon the facts until the time when an intelligent judgment will be possible. Something which occurs today may be the beginning of a series of circumstances which will not reach fruition for the next twenty-five years, but that period of time may prove how essential the circumstances were for our later good. (Cf. Gen. 45: 1-8; 50: 20.)

#### "Pray without Ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 16-18)

*Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward.* Only people who pray as the Bible teaches that Christians should can understand the injunctions which are given here. People who do not believe that which God has promised concerning his children will find it difficult to pray often, to say nothing of "without ceasing."

This should be enough to show that prayer is not merely asking for something. If people should undertake to pray without ceasing, as prayer is usually considered, there would not be any time left for the other duties which are enjoined upon God's children. But since this is an injunction which was given by an inspired

apostle we know that it is something which God expects of Christians, and which is possible for them to do.

One prays without ceasing when he habitually engages in prayer, and when he learns not to undertake the solution of any problem, or the accomplishment of any task, without taking the matter to God. Or, to state the same thing in other words, the person who prays without ceasing is the one who lives in daily fellowship with the Lord. When this is done, the spirit of prayer permeates the whole being and becomes more of an atmosphere than an act, more of an attitude than simply a deed, more of a spirit than merely doing something. It is holding one's self in tune with God, and delighting

to do so. It is then that the Spirit can take our groanings which we cannot utter and interpret them so as to make them into intercessions for us. (See Rom. 8: 26, 27.)

Rejoice! Pray without ceasing! In everything give thanks! This is God's will for his people, and it means a daily life in an attitude of spiritual consonance with God, which constitutes the highest degree of spiritual excellence of which human beings are capable. When one reaches this point, he has really learned to pray; and he enjoys an unbroken fellowship with God. (Cf. 1 John 1: 6, 7.) It is then much easier for him to live as he should; for he is constantly seeking to please God and thereby continue his fellowship with him. (Cf. 2. Cor. 5: 9.)

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What are some of the highest privileges which are given to men?  
How is prayer related to the total life of a Christian?  
Why is the practice of prayer neglected by so many people?  
What are some of the results of this neglect?  
Discuss the subject of prayer as it relates to character building.

Why is it necessary for people to be taught to pray?  
What influence has this model prayer had upon the human race?  
Analyze the prayer as recorded in the text of our lesson.  
Show the appropriateness of the "beginning point."  
Why is it so necessary to begin our prayers in the proper manner?  
Why is it essential to understand and respect the Fatherhood of God?  
What is one of the evidences of the divine revelation of this prayer?  
Discuss the first three petitions of this model prayer.  
When does the Christian take into consideration his own needs?  
Discuss the last three petitions of the prayer.  
What does the New Testament teach regarding praying in the name of Christ?  
What condition did Jesus mention in connection with this model prayer?  
Why is this true?  
Are there other conditions implied? Give reasons for your answer.

#### The Golden Text

Why does the supplication of a righteous man avail much in its working?  
What is one of the common mistakes made regarding prayer?  
What does it take to make a man righteous?  
What are some of the results which follow when righteousness is one's aim?  
State in a few words the secret of effective praying.

#### Prayer with Thanksgiving

What does the injunction of this section of the lessons imply?  
What effect does such faith have on God's people?  
What kind of encouragement did Jesus give to his disciples before he left them?  
What application did Paul make of this principle?  
What is meant by saying that all things work together for our good?  
What illustrations can you give of this?

#### The Divine Standard for Praying

What did Jesus say regarding hypocritical praying?  
What is a hypocrite?  
What should characterize the Christian when he prays?  
Why does the Lord forbid vain repetitions in prayer?  
Why did the Gentiles employ them in their prayers?  
Does the New Testament forbid all repetition in prayer? Give reasons for your answer.  
Quote the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to pray.  
Under what circumstances was this prayer probably spoken by Jesus?

#### "Pray without Ceasing"

What is necessary in order to understand these injunctions?  
What does it mean to pray without ceasing?  
What is the result of such a prayer-life?

## Lesson XI—September 10, 1961

## LIBERALITY IN GIVING

## Lesson Text

1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 8:1-9; 9: 6-8

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Ga-la'ti-a, so also do ye.

2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.

1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Mac-e-do'ni-a;

2 How that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, *they gave* of their own accord,

4 Beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints:

5 And *this*, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God.

6 Insomuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a begin-

ning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also.

7 But as ye abound in everything, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Je'-sus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

6 But this I *say*, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Let each man *do* according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness.*" (Luke 12: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 9: 10-15.

## Daily Bible Readings

September 4. M.....	Giving Ourselves (1 Cor. 9: 16-26)
September 5. T.....	Giving Our Means (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)
September 6. W.....	Giving Our Time and Effort (Luke 10: 25-37)
September 7. T.....	Proper Use of Wealth (1 Tim. 6: 11-19)
September 8. F.....	Rewards of Faithful Stewardship (Prov. 3: 1-10)
September 9. S.....	Recognizing God's Part (Mal. 3: 7-12)
September 10. S.....	An Unrighteous Steward (Luke 16: 1-13)

TIME.—First and Second Corinthians were written in the spring and fall of A.D. 57, respectively.

PLACES.—First Corinthians was written in Ephesus; Second Corinthians, probably in Macedonia.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Corinthian brethren.

## Introduction

One of the great tests of Christian character is one's attitude toward worldly possessions. This may be seen by reading such passages as

Mark 10: 17-22; and Luke 12: 13-21. The principle involved in these situations was clearly stated by Jesus in Matt. 6: 24. "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." Trust is a vital factor in pleasing God. (Heb. 11: 6), and he will not share that trust with any rival deity. There is no more effective way to determine one's attitude toward God, than by the manner in which he regards his material possessions.

Not only may material wealth indicate one's attitude toward God, it also shows something of his relation to his fellow men. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hatheth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 14-18.)

The principle stated in the preced-

### The Golden Text

"Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness." A practical definition of covetousness "is an inordinate desire for that which belongs to another; a desire to possess that to which he has no right. And inasmuch as the golden text for today is taken from the Lord's teaching against covetousness, we can do no better than to get before us the full context of that which he said.

"And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This

ing paragraphs was the one which Paul made use of in his effort to raise a contribution for the poor saints in the homeland of the Jews. The collection which Paul sought to raise was from the Gentile Christians or those brethren living in territories outside of Judaea. Many of the Jewish brethren in the homeland had never been entirely satisfied with the way in which Paul and his co-laborers had offered the gospel to the Gentiles; and the growing strength of the Gentile churches seemed only to increase their suspicion.

It had long been Paul's conviction that this feeling of resentment on the part of the Jewish brethren could, in a large degree at least, be allayed by getting the Gentile brethren to supply funds to relieve the needs of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and that immediate area. Accordingly, the Gentile churches of three or four provinces were urged by the apostle to unite their efforts in this endeavor. This was the immediate background against which Paul wrote the passages which serve as our text today. If the principle of acceptable giving and the occasion for its application are kept clearly in mind, it will be much easier to get the lesson which is intended for us.

will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12: 13-21.)

Thus instead of hoarding that which he had for his own selfish purpose, Jesus taught that the man in question should become rich toward God, which means that he should provide for the needs of the less fortunate. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah, and his good deed will he pay him again." (Prov. 19: 17.) This is another way of saying that those with worldly goods in their possession must learn the lesson of recognizing the supreme values of life.

It is not wrong for people to earn and possess material wealth; but it is wrong for them to regard it as their

own, with no sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. (See Luke 16: 1-13.)

## The Text Explained

### The Collection for the Saints

(1 Cor. 16: 1, 2)

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye.* There were several causes for the poverty-stricken condition in Judaea, but Paul saw in it an opportunity, not only to relieve the needs of the affected brethren, but also to do something which would bring the Jewish and Gentile Christians closer together. This was one of the duties urged upon Paul and Barnabas at the Jerusalem conference (Gal. 2: 10), and concerning which Paul later wrote the Galatian brethren (Gal. 6: 10). We know that the Gentile churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia had part in this great work, and probably others. It is interesting to note from this text that Paul used the Galatians as an example to the Corinthians, and from 2 Cor. 9: 2 that the Corinthians were held up as an example to the Macedonians.

Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. Giving on the first day of the week is a direct command of the Lord to his people, as may be clearly seen from this statement; but no informed student of the Bible would contend that that is all the giving which Christians may or should engage in: this is what they should do when they meet together on the first day of the week for worship. The passage now under consideration contains Paul's instruction regarding this collection and the reason for it, while the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians set forth the principles which should govern the Lord's people in carrying out this command.

Five questions are answered in the passage now before us, namely (1) When? "Upon the first day of the week," every first day of the week, according to the Greek—*kata mian sabbatou*. This definitely shows that the early church habitually met for worship on every first day of the week. (2) Who? "Each one of you." This should be sufficient to show that

one person cannot scripturally contribute for another—the husband and father for the wife and children, for example, any more than he can sing, pray, or eat the Lord's supper for them. If the head of the house gives money to his family for other needs, he can and should allot to his dependents money for Christian giving.

(3) What? "Lay by him in store," that is, make a contribution to the church treasury for the purpose in question. (4) How? "As he may prosper." There are some who try to evade this duty by saying that they do not know how much they have prospered. Such people do not seem to realize that they are impeaching God's wisdom; for that is what *he* said for them to do. Furthermore, no thoughtful man would think of telling the Federal Bureau of Internal Revenue that he does not know how much he has prospered!

To give as one has prospered is to give according to his ability. See Acts 11: 29; 2 Cor. 8: 12. If the average man will ask himself just why he is not "able" to do more than he is doing, and will determine to be true with himself and God in his answer, he will have little difficulty in seeing just what Paul meant in his instruction on this subject. To prosper literally means to gain or receive something, and when one gives as he has prospered he gives according to his gains or receipts; and when one does that he gives according to his ability, according to that which he has, and not according to that which he has not.

(5) Why? "That no collections be made when I come," that is, that sufficient funds may be on hand to meet the needs which may be before the congregation. It is just as important for one to give attention to God's plan for giving, as it is for him to give attention to his plan for saving the lost. (Cf. James 2: 10.)

### The Motive behind Liberal Giving

(2 Cor. 8: 1-9)

*Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of*

*Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the richest of their liberality.* The only Macedonian churches about which we have any information were those in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea. (See Acts 16: 11-17:12.) McGarvey and Pendleton point out that the district of Macedonia had suffered in three civil wars, and had been reduced to such poverty that Tiberius Caesar, hearkening to their petitions, had lightened their taxes. But in addition to the general poverty, the churches in that area had also been made poor by persecution (2 Thess. 1: 4). All of these circumstances, and especially the last, had put their Christian character to the test, and Paul wanted the Corinthian brethren to know what had happened to their brethren to the north of them, so that their example might inspire them in the noble work which he was urging upon them. When the Lord's people maintain an attitude toward their afflictions which characterized the Macedonian brethren, no opportunity for doing good to others will be anything less than a source of joy to them. The marginal reading of "liberality" is *singleness*, which seems to denote singleness of purpose. (Cf. Rom. 12: 8; James 1: 5-8; Matt. 6: 22, 23.)

*For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints; and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God. Inasmuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also.* The entire matter of giving, as viewed by Paul in this section of our lesson, involved the question of grace. God gave them the gracious opportunity of demonstrating the genuineness of their Christian character, in about the same manner in which he granted the Gentiles the opportunity of turning from sin unto him. (See Acts 11: 18.)

The example of the Macedonian Christians is one of the greatest exhibitions of stewardship to be found anywhere in the New Testament. The

secret behind it all is seen in the fact that they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to the work in hand through the will of God. This is a further demonstration of the truth of the statement that the gift without the giver is bare. Paul evidently knew of the poverty-stricken condition of the Macedonian brethren, but he hoped that they would be willing to do something to help the great cause which he was sponsoring. However, he soon learned that these brethren were taking their religion seriously. They did not wait to be asked, but earnestly pleaded with the brethren to allow them to have part in the work. Inspired by this great demonstration of loyalty and benevolence, Paul made bold to urge Titus to complete a similar work with the Corinthians.

*But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.* It will be well for those studying this lesson to notice the number of times Paul uses the term "grace" in this section of the text. In this division he lists "giving" as a grace or gift of the Spirit, along with some miraculous gifts which were prominent during the days of the church's infancy. (Cf. 1 Cor. 12: 4-11; 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-16.)

Paul does not mean to say that there is no command to give. Anyone who is familiar with the teaching of the Bible knows that some of our earnings belong to God to begin with (cf. 1 Cor. 9: 13, 14). No thoughtful person would contend that we can give God's part. Our giving, such as is taught in our lesson today, is from that which is in our possession *after* we have discharged our duty to God and the work which he has ordained for us to do. That is the reason such giving must be prompted by love. Sacrifice for the good of others is essentially cross-bearing, and only in that way can one become like Christ.

### The Process at Work

(2 Cor. 9: 6-8)

*But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.* The eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians might very properly be called Paul's statement of the principles which should govern Christians in their giving on the first day of the week. Webster defines a principle, as used here, as a settled principle of action; a governing law of conduct; a rule of conduct consistently directing one's actions. The New Testament principles of giving, if faithfully followed, will solve the problem of "church finances" and render this feature of Christian service acceptable to God.

The universal law of sowing and reaping is easily understood by the average person, and the principle which it illustrates is well known in nature. Paul makes it plain here that it is just as true in the realm of religion, as it is in the natural state. Albert Barnes thinks that the apostle made the statement in this connection to prevent the Corinthians from supposing that because their offering was to be on a voluntary basis they might give only from their superfluity, hence sparingly.

*Let each man do according as he he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.* To give with a purpose is to have an aim in mind, and resolve to discharge the obligation growing out of it. The giving which pleases God must result from

*settled convictions* and a *determined purpose*; and not from an *occasional impulse*. There is no place for purposeless and spasmodic giving in the service of Christ: God loves a cheerful giver, that is, one who is prompt and joyous in his giving. (Cf. Acts 4: 32.) No one should try to hold on to that which he should give as long as he can; our giving should be done *weekly*, not *weakly*.

After stating the positive side of the question, Paul next tells how not to give. "Not grudgingly," that is, of sorrow (margin) or out of grief, "with a sour, reluctant mind" (Thayer). (Cf. Deut. 15: 9, 10; 1 John 5: 3.) Not "of necessity," that is, not compelled to give.

*And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work.* God wants his children to learn to sympathize with their less fortunate brethren, and others as well (cf. 1 John 3: 13-18; Gal. 6: 10); for unless they do so they can never become like God and dwell where he is. He, accordingly places his goods in the hands of his people, as it were, and teaches them to be faithful stewards. When people learn to be unselfish, and will use that which God gives to them, he will always see that they have something to contribute to worthy causes. Meyer notes that "after Paul has aroused them to ample and willing giving, he adds further the assurance that God can bestow (Verses 8, 9), and will bestow (Verses 10, 11) on them the means also for such beneficence."

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

Why is one's attitude toward worldly possessions a test of character?

Show from the Scriptures that this is true.

How did Paul employ these scriptural principles, among the brethren?

Why did he want to raise a contribution from the Gentile brethren for the poor Jewish disciples?

#### The Golden Text

What is "covetousness"?

Under what circumstances did Christ teach a lesson on this subject?

How may one become rich toward God?

#### The Collection for the Saints

How did Paul go about raising the money for the poor of Judaea?

Should our giving be limited to the first day of the week worship? Give reasons for your answer.

What questions did Paul answer in the passage now before us?

Upon which first day of the week should Christians give?

What is involved in the question of "who" should give?

In what way is our contribution to be made?

How much should one give? and how determine this?

What reason is assigned for this weekly giving?

#### The Motive Behind Liberal Giving

What Macedonian churches do we know about, and what was their material condition?

Why did Paul mention these things to the Corinthians?

What was the motive behind the giving of Macedonians?  
 In what way is the matter of giving involved in grace?  
 Why did the Macedonian brethren entreat to be permitted to give?  
 Upon what basis did Paul urge the Corinthian brethren to give?  
 Show that the same principle must be followed by Christians today.

**The Process at Work**

How are the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians related to 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2?  
 What is the meaning of "principle" as it applies to giving?

Why mention the law of sowing and reaping?  
 Show that this principle is applicable both in nature and grace.  
 What is meant by purposeful giving?  
 Why do so many people try to hold on to that which they should give as long as they can?  
 What did Paul say about the negative side of giving?  
 What is meant by giving grudgingly or of necessity?  
 What lesson does God want his children to learn regarding other people?  
 What does Paul say that God is always able to do?  
 Why is this true?

**Lesson XII—September 17, 1961**

**LOVE OF BRETHREN**

**Lesson Text**

**John 13: 34, 35; 1 Cor. 13: 1-13**

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;

10 But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.

13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"We love, because he first loved us." (1 John 4: 19.)  
 DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 145: 9-21.

**Daily Bible Readings**

September 11. M.....	Love to God and Man Commanded (Mark 12: 28-34)
September 12. T.....	A Personal Obligation (Luke 10: 25-37)
September 13. W.....	Just Conduct Required (Lev. 9: 9-18)
September 14. T.....	The Mind of Christ (Phi. 2: 1-11)
September 15. F.....	Human and Divine Cooperation (Neh. 4: 15-23)
September 16. S.....	Proper Attitude Toward Others (Luke 6: 27-36)
September 17. S.....	Save Ourselves by Helping Others (Luke 6: 27-36)

TIME.—John, A.D. 30; First Corinthians, A.D. 57.

PLACES.—John, Upper room, Jerusalem; First Corinthians was written in Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples; Paul and the Corinthian brethren.

### Introduction

Love is without a doubt the greatest single force depicted in the Bible. The passage in John (3: 16) which tells of God's love for sinful humanity is often referred to as the Golden Text of the Bible. (Cf. Rom. 5: 6-8.) Paul compares love with faith and hope, and he declares that the greatest of these is love. It is only from God, as we shall see further on in the golden text, that we can learn what it really means to love each other.

It is, of course, impossible to separate love of brethren from the love of God, but in our study today it is our purpose to place the emphasis on the love which God expects his people to show toward each other. John declares, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3: 14, 15.) And again, "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.)

Some one has observed that the astonishing spread of Christianity throughout the Roman empire was not merely nor mainly due to the intellectual ability nor the organizing

capacity of the early Christian missionaries, nor even to their devotional zeal. These, of course, were contributing factors, in a very real sense; but that which counted most was the type of life which the Christians themselves demonstrated. (Cf. Col. 4: 5, 6; 1 Pet. 3: 1, 2, 15.) Thoughtful people of the world were, in many instances, dissatisfied with the coarseness, selfishness, and ineffective intellectualism which characterized their society; and when they saw in the followers of Jesus an atmosphere of thought and feeling, and modes of life and conduct, they recognized that there was something to which their nobler natures could respond.

These pagan people gradually became aware that what they were seeking for was in their midst—little communities of men and women living together as members of a united family, tending to their sick, caring for their poor, teaching their ignorant, consigning their dead with reverent hopefulness to the grave, and always ready to place their beneficent activities at the disposal of those outside their own fold who were in need of them and who were willing to receive them. And so these outsiders were attracted, and the attraction gradually became stronger till at length they found themselves swept into the current of the new movement, and ready to live and die in promoting it. Such is the motivating force of love when it fills the hearts of God's people for each other.

### The Golden Text

"We love, because he first loved us." A similar statement is found in 1 John 3: 16: "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15: 13.) But, as we have already seen, Jesus did not die for his friends only; he also died for his enemies. Any one who is willing to consider the Bible in its true light, is fully aware that God is first in everything which is good; and it is for that reason that

he is first in love. He demonstrated what love really is.

But not only did God's love precede our love, his love also begets love in us. That seems to be the point which the apostle is emphasizing in the text now before us—"We love, because he first loved us," or, to state the same thing in other words, our love is the result of his love. Love is like life, in this respect: it cannot spring into existence of its own accord; it must be communicated. No one can make the black coals on

the hearth burst into glowing flames without outside light; and so it is with love, it must come into the human heart from the outside. There is only one source of love, and that is God; and there can be no love in the heart of man, in the sense of our text, until God comes in and creates it there. It must result from a genesis, not by spontaneous generation.

Love may be thought of as the meeting-point between God and man, and when that love is genuine it resolves that contradiction between

them which, in theory and in practice, has been a curse to the world all through the ages. Love is the sublimest conception which is possible for human beings; and a life inspired by it is the most perfect form of goodness any mortal can conceive. Therefore, love is at once man's moral ideal and the very essence of God; and a life motivated by it is akin to the Divine, whatever other limitations it may have; for God is himself the source and fulness of love.

## The Text Explained

### The New Commandment

(John 13: 34, 35)

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. To understand something of the circumstances under which a statement is made often gives one a firmer grasp upon its meaning and significance. Jesus and his disciples had just finished their last pass-over supper together, and the feast to be known as the Lord's supper had just been instituted. The great lesson in humility had just been given, when Jesus, assuming the role of a servant, had washed the disciples' feet, apparently including those of Judas, and the announcement of the Lord's betrayal by one of their number had just been made. Judas had just left to complete the arrangements for his work of treachery, and Jesus and the eleven other disciples were alone in the upper room. The full statement in which the text is found is as follows:

"When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Looking at the matter through human eyes, it seems that the departure of Judas lifted, as it were,

a great burden from the shoulders of Jesus; for it was after he had gone that the Lord entered into some of his deepest and most affectionate conversations with the other disciples. If these men who were to be his ambassadors to the world could be taught the true meaning of love, and especially love for each other, then the battle, to a great extent, would be won.

The commandment which Jesus gave to his followers at this time is called "new," and in order to understand what he meant by that term the emphasis must be put upon "one another." The command to love one's neighbor as himself (Lev. 19: 18) was as old as the law of Moses; but with a new community about to be established, the Lord's people would be expected to have a special love for each other. This love must be patterned after the love of Jesus for them, which is described as love "unto the end," or to the uttermost. (See John 13: 1 and marginal reading.) This means that his love for them was to the highest degree possible.

*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* This has very appropriately been called the badge of discipleship, or the mark of distinction by which all men would recognize these people as the followers of Christ. In a striking historical confirmation of the Lord's words, Tertullian wrote, "But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. 'See,' they say, 'how they love one another,' for they themselves are animated by mutual hatred; 'see how they are ready even to die for one another,'

for they themselves will rather be put to death."

The fact that Jesus called this commandment "new" is enough to show that the love which he enjoined was something in addition to anything which he had hitherto taught. As already pointed out, it is the love which is to be manifested by his disciples for each other. Their love as brethren (*Philadelphia*) is to be, in the words of another, not a contradiction or exclusion, but a concentration and intensification of their love as men for their fellow men (philanthropic.). Peter makes this distinction in love in 2 Pet. 1: 7. "Brotherly kindness" [*love of the brethren, margin*] is "the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren" (Thayer), while "love" is the love of humanity, of all mankind, as distinct from, or in addition to, the love of the brethren.

### The Value and Nature of Love

(1 Cor. 13: 1-7)

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophesy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to, feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.* These words were addressed to a group of Christians in Corinth who were filled with ambition to exceed their brethren in spiritual gifts. They coveted that which they considered the most spectacular spiritual manifestation, and apparently wanted to use the church as a kind of stage for their display. In short, they aspired to be conspicuous figures among their fellow Christians and the world about them.

Paul had their correction in view when he wrote, "But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you." (1 Cor. 12: 31.) This "excellent way" is literally a way in the superlative degree—a way which has in perfection all the qualities which ought to characterize a way. It is a way which is open to every one, unobstructed, and leads straight to the goal of

Christian greatness. It is the way of love which Paul describes in the chapter now under consideration.

In keeping with the spirit of love which Paul sought to impress upon the Corinthian brethren, he used the first instead of the second person in addressing them. This was his way of illustrating the lesson which he wanted to teach. He could have said, "If you speak with the tongues of men and of angels," etc., but as it is he said, "If I speak," etc. And with this attitude toward them, he proceeded to set before them three classes of gifts, namely, (1) *emotional*—tongues of men and of angels, both human and divine, the greatest display of linguistic ability possible to men; (2) *intellectual*—prophecy, mysteries, knowledge, faith; (3) *practical*—the sacrifice of goods and body. And as one studies the life of Paul, it will be seen that all of these things were true of him in a very real sense, that is, he had these abilities and made these sacrifices. But over them all was the mantle of love.

*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.* This is Paul's practical definition of love, its essence. Any average Christian can, with a little reflection, soon determine whether or not love is the ruling principle of his life; and he should always keep before him the fact that without love he is nothing in God's sight and cannot live with him in heaven.

The closer one lives with Christ, the more suffering he will have to endure from the world (cf. 2 Tim. 3: 12); but love suffers long, and is kind to those who cause the suffering. (See 1 Pet. 2: 21-24.) Love does not envy the good fortunes of others, but can "rejoice with them that rejoice; and weep with them that weep." (Rom. 12: 15.) Love does not parade itself before others, is not inflated with pride and arrogance, because of its good fortunes, and does not betray its lack of sympathy for others by unbecoming and offensive conduct. It has been truly said that manners are an index to character. Love is

not selfish, but is interested in the welfare of others. Love lives not to get but to give. Love is not easily upset because of the unbecoming and sinful conduct of others; and does not hold grudges against those who mistreat it.

Love does not rejoice when sin is committed, and is not glad to see the downfall of those who are overcome by it. It is never glad when others go wrong; instead, it rejoices with the truth. Verse 7 contains that which may very properly be called *the optimism of love*. In saying that love beareth all things, the idea seems to be that love is not afraid to face life, with all that life means; for it cannot be crushed beneath its burdens: it has vast powers of recovery. Love takes the kindest views of the deeds and circumstances of others; it endeavors to look upon the bright, rather than upon the dark side of things. And if it cannot see the best today, it will hope for it tomorrow. The endurance of love is not simply that dogged persistency which continues in spite of adversity; it is rather that quality of love which suffers and forgives—it cannot be overcome by evil.

**The Supremacy of Love**

(1 Cor. 13: 8-13)

*Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.* Supernatural gifts were necessary during the early days of the church, but as it passed on toward maturity, those gifts were discarded, three of which are mentioned here, namely, prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, that is, supernatural knowledge, mentioned along with supernatural faith in verse 2. (Cf. Eph. 4: 11-16.) But love survives everything; it will hold its place, and never fall out.

*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.* It appears that Paul's purpose here was to contrast the imperfect state of the

church—the period during which supernatural gifts were necessary for its instruction—with the perfect state. The "perfect" which was to come is the *perfect source of information*, or, which is the same thing, the New Testament as we now have it. The same idea is expressed by Paul in 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17—"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.* These are but illustrations to enable the Corinthians, and all others who read this passage, to see the difference between the childhood state of the church, and the full-grown man. Paul, speaking after the manner of men, simply placed himself on both sides of the question—I was a child, now I am a man. The perfect knowledge which was essential to acceptable obedience was in "earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4: 7) during the early state of the church, and the people therefore did not have access to the perfect source of information except as men spoke to them; but after the age of miracles passed away and the full revelation was reduced to writing, then what existed in earthen vessels became available in book form—the perfect source of information.

*But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.* The essential permanence of these three graces is here asserted, but since love is the basis of both faith and hope, then love is greater. (See marginal reading.) But when the earth is no more and the eternal day has dawned, faith will be lost in sight, and hope, in fruition; but love will continue for ever—"love never faileth," and it is therefore the greatest.

**Questions for Discussion**

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

**Introduction**

Why is love so great?  
What does the New Testament say re-

carding the love of the brethren?  
 Why did Christianity spread so rapidly  
 in its early days?  
 Why is it that so many of the Lord's  
 people do not realize this today?

### The Golden Text

What is it that the golden text affirms?  
 What does the term "because" imply?  
 Why can't we love by our own power?  
 How is love related to God and man?

### The New Commandment

In what sense is this a new command-  
 ment?  
 Under what circumstances did Jesus utter  
 it?  
 What effect did the departure of Judas  
 appear to have on Jesus?  
 Why was the Lord so anxious for his  
 disciples to love one another?  
 What example did Jesus give his disciples  
 to follow?  
 What does the New Testament say about  
 his love for them?  
 How is it that all men will recognize the  
 Lord's people as his?  
 What is the difference between love of the  
 brethren and love of all men?

### The Value and Nature of Love

In what way did Paul show the value  
 of love?  
 Why did he write about it as he did?

What is the "excellent" way which he  
 proposed to show them?  
 Why is it so great?  
 What Christian "tactfulness" did Paul  
 manifest?  
 In what way did he illustrate his lesson?  
 What verses of the text contain Paul's  
 practical definition of love?  
 Why do faithful Christians have to suffer  
 for Christ?  
 What should their attitude be in such  
 matters?  
 Why doesn't love envy?  
 How does love conduct itself before  
 others?  
 Why are manners an index to character?  
 Why doesn't love hold grudges?  
 What is the attitude of love toward  
 wrongdoing?  
 Discuss the four points in the "optimism  
 of love."

### The Supremacy of Love

With what is love contrasted in this sec-  
 tion of our lesson?  
 Why were supernatural gifts necessary  
 during the early days of the church?  
 What is the meaning of "know in part,"  
 etc?  
 What was the "perfect" to come? and  
 when did it come?  
 How did Paul illustrate this part of the  
 lesson?  
 In what sense was the truth in the early  
 church in "earthen vessels"?  
 How is love greater than faith and hope?

## Lesson XIII—September 24, 1961

### THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

#### Lesson Text

#### 1 John 2: 25; 2 Cor. 5: 1-10

25 And this is the promise which  
 he promised us, *even* the life eternal.

1 For we know that if the earthly  
 house of our tabernacle be dissolved,  
 we have a building from God, a  
 house not made with hands, eternal,  
 in the heavens.

2 For verily in this we groan, long-  
 ing to be clothed upon with our  
 habitation which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we  
 shall not be found naked.

4 For indeed we that are in this  
 tabernacle do groan, being burdened;  
 not for that we would be unclothed,  
 but that we would be clothed upon,  
 that what is mortal may be swal-  
 lowed up of life.

5 Now he that wrought us for this

very thing is God, who gave unto  
 us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Being therefore always of good  
 courage, and knowing that, whilst  
 we are at home in the body, we are  
 absent from the Lord

7 (for we walk by faith, not by  
 sight);

8 We are of good courage, I say,  
 and are willing rather to be absent  
 from the body, and to be at home  
 with the Lord.

9 Wherefore also we make it our  
 aim, whether at home or absent, to  
 be well-pleasing unto him.

10 For we must all be made mani-  
 fest before the judgment-seat of  
 Christ; that each one may receive the  
 things done in the body, according  
 to what he hath done, whether it be  
 good or bad.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"In hope of eternal life, which God, who, cannot lie, prom-  
 ised before times eternal." (Tit. 1: 2.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—John 14: 1-14.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- September 18. M..... Called to Glory and Virtue (2 Pet. 1: 1-5)
- September 19. T..... Hope in God (Psalm 130: 1-8)
- September 20. W..... Hope for Life Eternal (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)
- September 21. T..... Assurance of Resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 12-23)
- September 22. F..... Hope in Christ (Col. 1: 24-29)
- September 23. S..... Hope in Salvation (Rom. 8: 18-25)
- September 24. S..... The Christian's Hope (John 14: 1-6)

TIME.—First John, between A.D. 90 and 100; Second Corinthians, A.D. 57.  
 PLACES.—First John, Ephesus; Second Corinthians, Macedonia.  
 PERSONS.—John, Paul, and the one to whom they wrote.

**Introduction**

Linguists tell us that the word "hope is from a root which signifies the opening of the eyes, and that *it* has a close family relation with the term "gape" which describes the opening of the mouth. With these two related ideas in mind, it is fairly easy to get two very suggestive pictures which may help us to get the basic meaning of the word hope. One is that of a little child standing on tiptoe with wide-open eyes, in evident and eager expectation of some wonderful sight, and with all of its nature thrilled with interest and excitement.

The other picture is that of a cozy nest of newly hatched birds, with upturned opened beaks, waiting for the morsels which the mother-bird will bring. These two pictures, when viewed by the thoughtful, indicate the attitude of those who look and wait in anticipation of that which the gospel offers the obedient. In the words of another, it is the attitude of expectant forelook, of confident waiting, of awakened desire which leaps toward an assured satisfaction.

That which has just been said is the true spirit of the Christian life. It is the spirit which finds intenser interest in tomorrow than in yesterday, which is lifted out of debility of regret by the grace of new promise,

and which turns with quenchless and confident anticipation to the dawn of a richer life in store. It is the spirit which lives in the future, by the future, for the future. (The Speaker's Bible, Romans, Vol. II.)

The principal ingredients which go to make up hope are (1) *expectancy*—the outlooking of the soul as opposed to the inlooking, the looking away from one's self to some person or good; (2) *desire*—one may expect something and dread it; but when expectation is coupled with desire, then he wants it; (3) *anticipation*—the bringing of the distant and the future near; living in the future, as it were, before it comes; seeing things as they will be, and not merely as they are.

Someone has said that there is no more sustaining and transforming influence on human life, than the influence of hope. If a man has hope that his weary struggle will end in something better, that the battle will result in victory, that from the surgical operation will come a healthier and more satisfying life, then he has an asset which will very likely bring him through his ordeal. And of all the realms in which this virtue is indispensable, the spiritual is the chief. The spirit of hope is absolutely essential, if success is to be achieved.

**The Golden Text**

"In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal." Inasmuch as the golden text for today is only a part of a sentence, it will be helpful to an understanding of it to quote the full context. "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot

lie, promised before times eternal; but in his own seasons manifested his word in the message, wherewith I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Saviour; to Titus, my true child after a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour." (Tit. 1: 1-4.)

Thus, it can be seen that the promise which Paul refers to is bound up

in the purpose and plans of God, as revealed in the gospel message. The marginal reading of "before times eternal" is *long ages ago*. (Cf. 2 Tim. 1: 9.) Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown paraphrase the statement in this way: Purposed before the world began (literally, before the ages of time), and promised actually in time (the promise springing from the eternal purpose). Alford notes that the construction is a mixed one—compounded of the actual promise made in time, and the divine purpose from which the promise sprung, fixed in eternity.

Alford continues, Thus, as God is

## The Text Explained

### God's Promise to His People

(1 John 2: 25)

*And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal.* If one is asked as to what is meant by the expression "life eternal," he will probably reply by saying that it means a life which will last for ever; a life which will never end. That, of course, is true, if one is thinking only about the duration, of such a life; but any one who is acquainted with the teaching of the New Testament is aware of the fact that there is more to life eternal than its mere duration. All men, both the good and the bad, have a life (soul) which will always exist; but mere duration of existence is not necessarily desirable. The wicked would gladly welcome the end of their existence, when this earthly life is over.

Thus, it can easily be seen that *duration* is not the only feature which goes into the idea of eternal; *quality* also enters into the definition of the term. God is eternal, not simply because he will always exist; that is not where the emphasis really belongs: he will always exist *because* of the quality of his being. Even God himself would not always exist, if he were not what he is. Therefore, those who expect to enjoy eternal life with the Father must understand here and now that there is more to eternal life than merely eternal existence.

If people who expect to go to heaven when this life is over will focus their attention on the quality of their life, and make sure that they

said to have given us grace in Christ from eternal ages (2 Tim. 1: 9), meaning that the gift took place as the result of a divine purpose fixed from eternity, so here he is said to have promised eternal life before eternal times, meaning that the promise took place as the result of a purpose fixed from eternity. (Cf. Rom. 16: 25, 26.) The fact that God cannot lie is also affirmed in other parts of the New Testament. (See Heb. 6: 18.) Observe the great propositions set forth in the golden text: "hope," "eternal life," "the ever truthful God," "promised," and "before times eternal." or "long ago."

are living according to that principle, they need not be afraid as to what the future holds for them. "Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. 2: 20, 21.)

There are two types of character described in the verses just quoted—one which will always endure and one which is only temporary. Gold will endure because of its nature; it cannot be destroyed because of what it is. "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23: 10.) The materials which are placed in contrast with gold do not possess this enduring quality and will, of course, be destroyed when the testing time comes. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 12-15.)

There would be little satisfaction in the mere endless continuation of life, even in heaven, apart from the question of its quality. When Jesus and the New Testament writers talked and wrote about eternal life, they had reference primarily to the life which is imparted by the Father, following a complete surrender to the will of God, as revealed in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. (See Rom. 8: 1, 2; Rom. 6: 3, 4; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Col. 3: 9, 10; 1 John 5: 10-13.)

When it is affirmed, therefore, that we have eternal life now, the emphasis is not upon its *duration*, but upon its *quality*, that is, upon its kind. The new life which we have

in Jesus can no more be destroyed than can Christ (cf. Col. 3: 4). We can lose the life as long as we are in the flesh, but it cannot be destroyed. (Cf. John 3: 36; 1 Cor. 4: 4; 9: 27.) The question of *duration* therefore will not be settled until this earthly sojourn is over, and herein lies the significance of the passage now under consideration, as well as the one which serves as our golden text. We can have eternal life in the sense of its quality here and now, without having it eternally; but when once we have gained the other shore, there will be no further danger of losing our inheritance; and that is what God has promised his people in Christ. "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward." (2 John 8.)

**The Temporal and the Eternal**

(2 Cor. 5: 1-4)

*For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.* This and the following section of our lesson for today is a part of Paul's argument regarding the blessings of the future state of the Christian in contrast with the sufferings of this life. The preceding verses of chapter four should be read before entering chapter 5. "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. 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: 16-18.)

Whatever happens to the faithful Christian in this life works for him more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory (cf. Rom. 8: 28); and if the result is the death of the body (spoken of in the text now before us as *taking down a tent*), he has nothing to lose; for God has for him a permanent dwelling, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. Some writers profess to see in this contrast a reference to the Jewish tabernacle which was

supplanted by the more durable temple, and that may have been what Paul intended; but it appears to be more in keeping with the context to view the matter as suggested by Stanley (quoted by Alford), "The whole passage is expressed through the double figure of a house or tent, and a garment. The explanation of this abrupt transition from one to the other may be found in the image which, both from his occupation and his birthplace, would naturally occur to the apostle—the tent of Cilician hair-cloth, which might almost equally suggest the idea of a habitation and of a vesture." But whatever may have been the figure before the apostle, the contrast is between the removing of the temporary tent and the occupancy of the eternal abode. (Cf. Job 4: 21; Eccl. 12: 6; 2 Pet. 3: 11-13.)

*For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life.* Paul's statement in Rom. 8: 18-23 may be regarded as a commentary on the *groaning* of the passage now before us. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Paul also speaks of our "groanings which cannot be uttered" in Rom. 8: 26, and the idea before him seems to be the longing (which gave rise to the groaning) to be freed from the

sufferings of this life, and ushered into the glories of the home of the soul. (Cf. Phil. 1: 21-24.) The "naked" state to which the apostle referred was the disembodied spirit. Paul did not want to be found in that condition, but rather with the spiritual body which God has for his glorified people. (See 1 Cor. 15: 35ff.)

### The End in View

(2 Cor. 5: 5-10)

*Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* It has always been God's intention that the mortal in man will ultimately be swallowed up in life; and it is for that reason that he has placed in his people the longing and consequent groaning for its accomplishment. Those who are truly spiritual have their minds set on the things which are above, rather than upon the things of the earth (see Col. 3: 1-4). They expect to be like God in the world to come, and they realize that every one who has this hope within himself must purify himself even as he is pure (1 John 3: 1-3).

The "earnest of the Spirit" is the same as *the Spirit as an earnest*. The terms are appositional. (Cf. 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1: 13, 14.) We learn from Acts 5: 32 that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him, which means that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the child of God is proof that God is pleased with him, and that the promises which he has made to him will surely be fulfilled, if the faithful life is continued. An "earnest" is sometimes called part payment on the total obligation; it is a pledge that full payment will be made. "For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us. Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. 1: 20-22.)

*Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.* The

confidence which Paul expressed in this part of our lesson is a continuation of that voiced in verse 1. Knowing God's intention regarding his people, and possessing the Spirit as a pledge of the fulfillment of all his promises to his children, the apostle had every reason to be confident of the future. To be "at home in the body" is to be alive in this world; and that, in turn, means to be absent from the Lord in the glory world. (See again Phil. 1: 21-24.)

The parenthetical statement of verse 7 explains the sense in which we are absent from the Lord. The entire passage is rendered by Phillips in these words: "Now the power that has planned this experience for us is God, and he has given us the Spirit as a guarantee of its truth. This makes us confident, whatever happens. We realize that being 'at home' in the body means that to some extent we are 'away' from the Lord, for we have to live by trusting him without seeing him. We are so sure of this that we would really rather be 'away' from the body and be 'at home' with the Lord." The two "elements" which make up faith are *conviction* and *confidence*; and when people walk by faith they are convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures of the reality of things not seen, and they have confidence regarding the truthfulness of that which God has said about them. (See Rom. 10: 17; Heb. 11: 1, 6.)

*Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* The question of salvation, whether in becoming a Christian or in living the Christian life, depends upon both God and the individual. Paul, after speaking of his confidence because of what God has done, next turned to the ground of his confidence because of his part. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 3-5.) "So whether I am at home or away from it, it is my ambition to please him. For we must all appear in our true characters before the tribunal of the Christ, each to be repaid with good or evil for the life he has lived in the body." (Goodspeed.)

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What is the significance of our word "hope"?  
Illustrate its meaning.  
What are the principal ingredients of hope?  
What effect does hope have on the life of a faithful Christian?

#### The Golden Text

Give the full context of this part of our lesson.  
How is God's promise to his people related to his purpose and plans?  
Why can't God lie?

#### God's Promise to His People

What is the meaning of "eternal life"?  
What is the difference between its duration and its quality?  
Where do many people usually put the emphasis on this question? Why?  
Why is it necessary for people to give attention to the quality of their living here and now?  
How did Paul illustrate this principle? (2 Tim. 2:20, 21.)  
When and where does eternal life begin?  
Read and discuss the scripture cited.  
In what sense do we have eternal life now?  
Is it possible for one to lose such life?  
Give reasons for your answer.

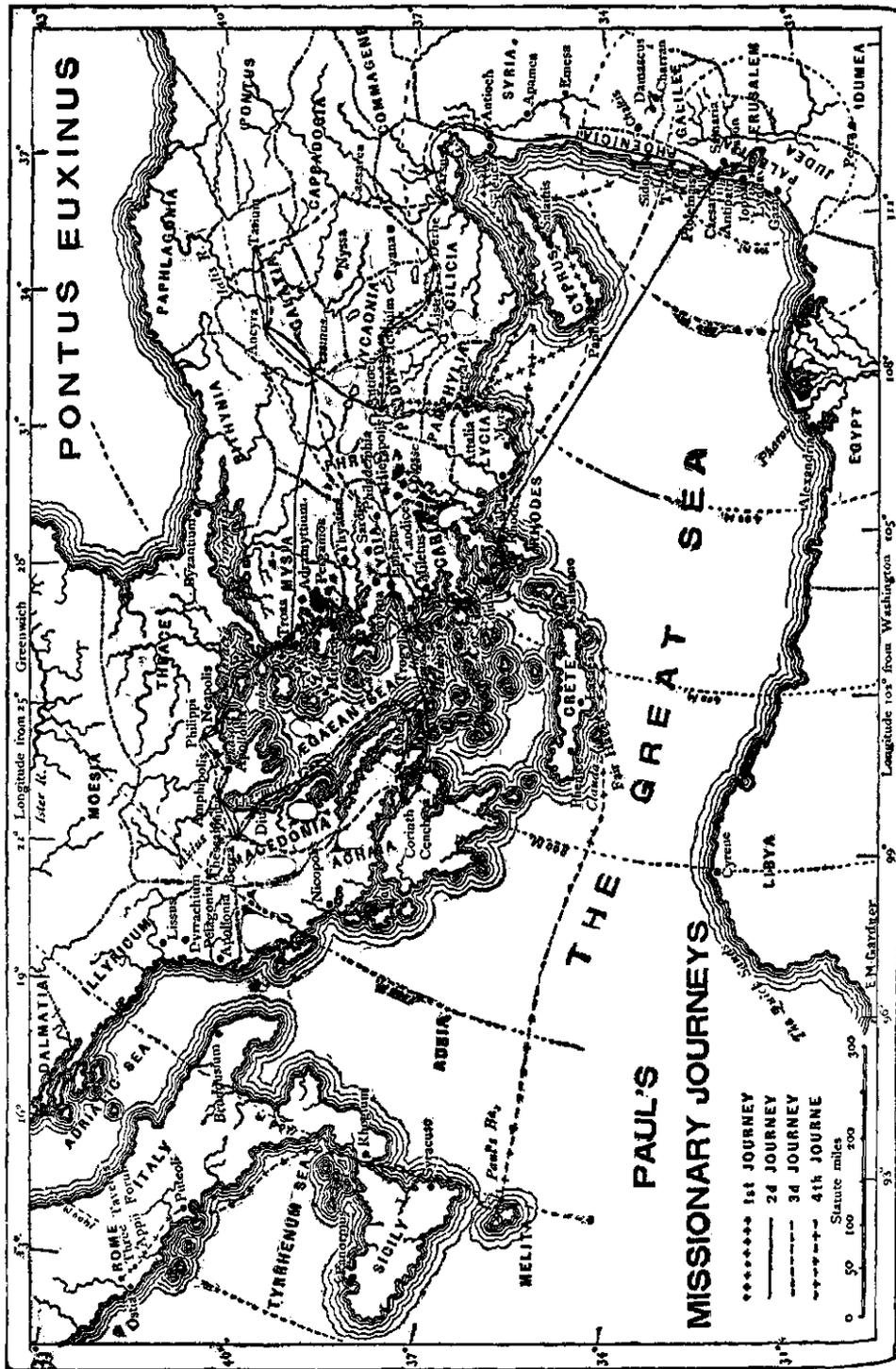
#### The Temporal and the Eternal

Give the setting of this portion of our lesson text.

What effect do the experiences of life have on the obedient child of God?  
In what way does Paul speak of death?  
Why did the apostle have such confidence regarding the future?  
Discuss the contrast which he set forth.  
What "groaning" did Paul have reference to?  
Why do Christians "groan"? (Compare Rom. 8:18-23.)  
What did Paul mean by being "naked"?

#### The End in View

What has always been God's purpose regarding his people?  
What effect does this have on our spiritual attitude?  
What is meant by the "earnest of the Spirit"?  
When does God give the Holy Spirit to his people?  
Show the relationship between the Spirit as an earnest and the promises which God has made to his people.  
How does Paul resume his discussion of his great confidence?  
What is the meaning of being "at home" and "absent" from the Lord?  
In what way did the apostle illustrate or explain this?  
What are the two principal "elements" of faith?  
Show how the principle of faith works in the Christian life.  
Upon what does the question of salvation depend?  
How does Peter illustrate the matter? (2 Pet. 1:3-5.)  
What did Paul say his great aim in life was?  
What effect should the closing verse of our lesson have on people today?



# PONTUS EUXINUS

# THE GREAT SEA

# PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

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- 24 JOURNEY
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Statute miles  
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E. M. Gardner

71° Longitude from 25° Greenwich  
 later 4.

Longitude 103° from Washington 105°

## FOURTH QUARTER

### VITAL THEMES OF THE SCRIPTURES

AIM.—*To consider anew the great lessons of scripture concerning Providence, Redemption and Eternal Salvation, so that we may more nearly conform to the will of our Father in heaven.*

#### Lesson I—October 1, 1961

### THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

#### Lesson Text

**Acts 2: 41-47; Eph. 4: 11-16; 1 Tim. 5: 16**

41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.

46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

11 And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, unto the building up of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;

15 But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, *even* Christ;

16 From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in *due* measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

16 If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it."* (Eph. 5: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 21: 9-18.

#### Daily Bible Readings

September 25. M.....	Soul Winning (Dan. 12: 3; James 1: 19, 20)
September 26. T.....	Building Up in the Faith (Eph. 4: 11-16)
September 27. W.....	Christ, Our Example (John 9: 1-5)
September 28. T.....	A Call for Laborers (Luke 10: 1-11)
September 29. F.....	Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20: 1-16)
September 30. S.....	Spirit Filled Workmen (Ex. 31: 1-11)
October 1. S.....	A Gospel of Work (John 5: 10-18)

TIME.—Acts, A.D. 29; Ephesians, A.D. 62; First Timothy, probably A.D. 65-67.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Rome, and probably Philippi.

PERSONS.—The early Jerusalem Christians, Paul, and those to whom he wrote.

### Introduction

This is a good opportunity for those studying these lessons to re-emphasize the meaning of the term "church." The subject of *denominationalism* has resulted in great confusion regarding the New Testament meaning of the word church. As a matter of fact, there are but relatively few people today, even in the church, who always employ the term in its strictly New Testament sense. There are too many people who accept popular ideas of the day regarding the church, rather than that which the Lord himself has taught concerning it. More Bible reading, and less consideration of that which men say, needs to be engaged in, if we are to learn the truth regarding the subject now before us.

The original New Testament word for church is *ekklesia*. (Cf. *ek*, out, and *kaleo*, to summon or call.) This original term was not coined by Jesus and the apostles, but was in general use by the Greek-speaking people during the time Jesus was engaged in his personal ministry. The term never had any religious significance among the Greeks. It literally meant the *called-out ones*, or *an assembly*, and it was applied to any body of people, called out and gathered together for any purpose. There is nothing about the word itself which indicated the character of the assembly. It might have been religious, political, or an unorganized mob. The term was twice applied to the mob in Ephesus, once to the proconsular court, and once to the Israelites in the wilderness. (See Acts 19: 32, 39; 41; 7: 38.) Thus the *kind* of church must always be determined by the context. Other terms and circumstances must determine

whether reference is to a church of God or to a church of men.

The first time the word "church" occurs in the Scriptures is in Matt. 16: 18, where Jesus said that he would build, that is, *found* (see Thayer), his *ekklesia* (church). This meant nothing more nor less than that he would call his people together and constitute them into an assembly to be known as the people of God, in contrast with the people of the world. (Cf. John 10: 16; 15: 18, 19; 17: 14-16; 1 Pet. 2: 9.) Robertson (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*) observes that the word originally meant "assembly," but that it came to mean an "unassembled assembly," such as Acts 8: 3. The people of God during the days of Moses were God's church (*ekklesia*) for that period (Acts 7: 38), and they had the Old Testament as their law; and in like manner, the people of God during the age of Christ are his church (*ekklesia*) for this period (1 Cor. 15: 9; 1 Tim. 3: 15; cf. Heb. 3: 1-6), and we have the New Testament for our law. Read Gal. 3: 15-4: 7 for the contrast between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ.

In the light of that which has just been said, the church of Christ is the people of God (cf. Acts 18: 9, 10) who heed the Lord's call through the gospel, and thereby become his subjects, his people, or his body. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16; 2 Thess. 2: 13, 14; Col. 3: 15.) These people are not called together in a literal or physical sense, as was the uproarious assembly in Ephesus, or the Israelites in the wilderness. Those who belong to Christ are a spiritual body; they are called out of and separated from the world in a spiritual sense.

### The Golden Text

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." Paul was speaking about the same thing when he addressed these words to the Ephesian elders: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) The marginal reading for "purchased" is *acquired*, that is, obtained or gained

for himself. The original is found only in the passage just quoted and 1 Tim. 3: 13: "For they that have served well as deacons *gain* to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." The practical meaning of Christ's giving himself for the church is that he acquired a people through his death who are to be his in a peculiar sense. (See 1 Pet. 2: 9; Tit. 2: 14.)

The setting of the golden text can best be seen by reading the context in which it is found. "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 22-27.)

We should not lose sight of the fact that *OUT lesson for today has to do*

with the *work* of the church, and if we are willing to read that which the New Testament says on the subject, we shall see that that is precisely what the Lord expects of his people. "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.) "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, *which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.*" (Eph. 2: 10.) "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 marvelous light.* (1 Pet. 2: 9.) Paul specifically affirms that the Scriptures furnish the Lord's people "completely unto every good work." (See 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; cf. Tit. 3: 1.)

## The Text Explained

### The Example of the Early Church

(Acts 2: 41-47)

*They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.* The people who received his word were the ones who responded to Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. The church on the day of its beginning numbered about three thousand, and from its history, as seen from the lesson text, we can see that they began immediately to work at their calling. When people gladly receive the gospel message, they are always ready to do that which the Lord commands. Peter and his fellow apostles preached that which Jesus commanded in the great commission, and that is what those who gladly received the word did. There is no indication that any of this number argued with Peter regarding the terms of forgiveness. They wanted to be free from their guilt, and when they learned what the Lord wanted done they did not hesitate: "They then that received his word were baptized." This is the kind of obedience which pleases the Lord.

And *they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.* This is the first statement of "church history," and it sets forth

the characteristic marks of the Christian life to which the early church was pledged by their acceptance of the gospel message. God himself set the apostles in the church (1 Cor. 12: 28), and they constituted the visible center of unity of the newly established institution. The new disciples were gathered around them, and from them the doctrine and discipline of the infant church proceeded. The early church was one body, and the world quickly recognized its unity and felt its power.

The *teaching of the apostles* was the necessary instrumentality for bringing the new converts into full and complete discipleship. Their rudimentary faith needed careful and continuous instruction; and the same principle is just as applicable today. The *fellowship*, according to Vincent, is "a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and a mutual, active participation in that interest and in each other." Thus, the apostles instructed the disciples, and they, in turn, put into practice that which they learned. There was therefore a joint-participation in the work by both the teacher and the taught.

The *breaking of bread* was evidently the Lord's supper. The New Testament nowhere teaches that the Lord's supper is the most important

part of the worship, as some have erroneously thought; but from such passages as Luke 22: 29, 30 and Acts 20: 7, it is natural to conclude that the Lord's day worship is centered around the Lord's table. The *prayers* apparently were the public prayers of the early disciples, but it is possible, of course, that they include their private devotions.

*And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.*

The passage just quoted gives us some idea of the daily activities of the early church. The *fear* referred to was a reverent awe which characterized unbelievers, inspired in part at least by the signs and wonders which were wrought through the apostles. The so-called "community of goods" was necessary because many of the new converts were from among those who were sojourning in Jerusalem and were without resources. They had come from their homes to the feast of Pentecost, but after their conversion they remained in the city for further instruction. This condition prevailed nowhere else, as may be seen by many references in the New Testament to the rich and the poor. (Cf. 1 Tim. 6: 17; Gal. 2: 10; 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; James 2: 1-5.) It appears that they were taught in the temple, but went to their homes for their daily food, called here "breaking bread."

*And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.* The marginal note says, *were being saved*. Phillips renders the passage in these words: "Every day the Lord added to their number those who were finding salvation." This is enough to show that the church and the saved are one and the same. In fact, no one can take a New Testament and read about a church of the Lord in any given community, and at the same time show that there was a

single saved person in that community who was not a member of the church. This is true because the saved are the church!

### The Lord's Plan for Growth and Unity

(Eph. 4: 11-16)

*And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* In the absence of a written law to guide them, the early church had to depend upon inspired teachers for their instruction. This is what Paul meant when he said, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." (See 2 Cor. 4: 7.) The will of the Lord in those days could be made known only by inspired men; but after it was reduced to writing, then we can very properly say that what they had in earthen vessels we now have in book form.

Several of the principal inspired teachers are listed here. The apostles are the first and foremost. They are the ones through whom the Lord made known his will to men. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6-10; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) These men completely set in order that which is to be taught and practiced by Christians. They have no successors; for their rule of faith and practice still stands. (Cf. Matt. 19: 28; Gal. 1: 6-9; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) The prophets were inspired to make known to others the will of God which had been revealed to them by the apostles. Their services would not be required after the will of God was available to all men through the written revelation. (See again 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

The *evangelists* were those teachers who were supplied with spiritual gifts suited for work in places where the gospel was unknown. They were the missionaries of that day. They were able to speak the word which had been revealed through the apostles, and were able to perform miracles for the confirmation of their message. (Cf. 1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 6.) *Pastors and teachers* were those who were

enabled to teach and direct the various congregations of Christians before they had a written revelation. They correspond to our present-day elders. Vincent notes that no man is fit to be a pastor who cannot teach, and the teacher needs the knowledge which pastoral experience gives. It should be obvious, even to the superficial, that evangelists and pastors and teachers are needed for all ages of the church; but they have no need for inspiration today.

The scope and purpose of the work of the inspired teachers is carefully set forth in verses 12, 13: "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In other words, this miraculous ministry was to continue until the perfect standard had been revealed and realized. The teaching of the Holy Spirit is a unit, and the unity of the Spirit requires that all of its adherents recognize and accept the oneness of the Christian system. (See Eph. 4: 3-6; 1 Cor. 1: 10; 12: 12, 13.)

*That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.* These verses continue to point to the ultimate goal of Christian growth. Those who

follow Christ should not be "childish" in their attitude, but moving toward maturity. They should not be running after every new idea or teacher, and thus run the danger of being tricked into the ways of error.

The marginal reading for "speaking truth" is dealing truly, and the idea seems to be that of conducting oneself according to the truth; for all things connected with the Christian life must be governed by the truth, tempered by love. If this is done, then the headship of Christ will be respected, and the entire body will function according to his will, with the result that the "power within the body" will manifest itself in the growth which God expects.

### The Church and Practical Christianity

(1 Tim. 5: 16)

*If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.* There are certain obligations which rest upon individual members of the church, and they have no right to shirk them and expect the church as such to take care of them. This is the gist of Paul's statement in the verse now under consideration; but it is just as clear that the church, too, has obligations which are not the obligations of individual members. It should also be noted that Paul does not specifically tell how the church is to discharge these duties. Any method therefore which does not violate a known principle of the New Testament may be employed. No one has the right to require one acceptable method, to the exclusion of others, when more than one such method is available. It is just as wrong to make a law where God has not made one, as it is to break one which he has made.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

### Introduction

Discuss the New Testament meaning of the term "church".

What can you say of the etymology of the original word for church?

Under what circumstances did Jesus first use the word church?

Distinguish between the church of the Old Testament and that of the New.

In what way was the church established?

### The Golden Text

What is the meaning of Christ's giving himself for the church?

Give the setting of the golden text. Why is the "work of the church" an appropriate subject?

What should always guide Christians in all their activities? Discuss fully.

### The Example of the Early Church

Discuss the origin of the church of the New Testament.

What always happens, when people gladly receive the word of the Lord?

Discuss Peter's sermon on Pentecost in the light of the great commission.  
 What is the first recorded statement of church history?  
 In what way were the apostles related to the church?  
 How can people continue in the apostles' teaching? and why is this so essential?  
 In what "fellowship" did the early disciples continue? and is such possible for Christians today?  
 Show that the "breaking of bread" was the Lord's supper.  
 What prayers are referred to? Give reasons for your answer.  
 How did the outside world regard the early church? Why?  
 Why did the first church have a "community of goods"?  
 Was that an example for other congregations? Give reasons for your answer.  
 Describe the daily activities of the first Christians.  
 What is said regarding the daily increase of the church?  
 The Lord's Plan for Growth and Unity  
 What is said of the early ministry of the church?

Why were these various ministers needed? Show which of them were temporary and which were permanent.  
 Why are there no apostles today as successors of the first ones?  
 Who were the prophets?  
 In what sense did the early church have the gospel in earthen vessels?  
 Who were the "evangelists" and what was their particular work?  
 Who were the "pastors and teachers" and what was their work?  
 How long was the miraculous ministry to continue?  
 How do we know that it accomplished its purpose?  
 In what sense should Christians not be "children"?  
 What is the ultimate goal of Christian growth?  
 How was it originally brought about?  
 The Church and Practical Christianity  
 Distinguish between individual and congregational obligations.  
 How are the duties of the church to be carried out?

Lesson II—October 8, 1961

CHRISTIAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Lesson Text

Col. 2: 6; Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Pet. 3:18

6 As therefore ye received Christ Je'-sus the Lord, so walk in him,

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded

your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints,

18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Je'-sus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. A-men.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2: 52.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Pet. 1: 5-8.

Daily Bible Readings

October 2.	M.....	The Armour of Light (Rom. 13: 12-14)
October 3.	T.....	Risen with Christ (Col. 3: 1-15)
October 4.	W.....	Crucified with Christ (Gal 2: 15-20)
October 5.	T.....	Walking in Love (Eph. 5: 1-20)
October 6.	F.....	The Christian Graces (2 Pet. 1: 5-11)
October 7.	S.....	Living by God's Word. (Duet. 8: 1-3)
October 8.	S.....	Growth in Grace (2 Pet. 3: 17, 18)

TIME.—Colossians and Ephesians were written in A.D. 62; Second Peter, probably A.D. 67 or 68.

PLACES.—Colossians and Ephesians were written in Rome; Second Peter, probably in Babylon.

PERSONS.—Paul and Peter, and those to whom they wrote.

### Introduction

The fact that Christians enter the church as babes in Christ (1 Pet. 2: 2), and are later referred to as fullgrown men (Heb. 5: 14), is sufficient evidence to show that God expects his people to grow. But we are not left to reason about this question; for the New Testament plainly teaches that such is the will of the Lord. (See Heb. 5: 12-14; 1 Pet. 1: 1, 2; 2 Pet. 3: 18.) Any person therefore who refuses the divine means of spiritual growth, or who allows something to hinder his growth which he could prevent, cannot be pleasing to God.

The soul or spirit of man is the most important truth about him; for it has a direct connection with God. Jesus has made it plain that there is nothing which can compensate for its destruction. (See Matt. 16: 26.) But the soul can never be that which

it is capable of being, unless it grows, and that growth must be according to the Lord's fundamental laws of growth. This principle is forcefully illustrated in Eph. 4: 11-16, as we saw in our lesson last week.

We learn from Gen. 2: 7 that "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." In his pristine state, man enjoyed direct and intimate fellowship with his Maker; but when he became guilty of sin that relationship was broken. And being cut off from God, it became necessary for the soul of man to be redeemed, if he would live with God eternally. This redemption was made possible through the sacrifice of Christ, and the growth which follows must be according to his direction.

### The Golden Text

*"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."* In keeping with the words of the subject of our lesson for today, the *growth and development* of Jesus was ideal in every respect; and since the reference is primarily to him as a human being, his advancement can be looked upon as an example for any normal person under similar circumstances. Or, to state the same thing in other words, young people now should grow mentally, physically, morally, and spiritually.

The growth and development of a Christian is not simply an academic question. Jehovah in whom we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17: 28) is a living God; and if we are to serve him we must show a great deal of vitality in our own lives. As long as there is life there must be growth; and since it is the will and purpose of Jesus that his people have life, and have it abundantly (John 10: 10), their growth must be continuous. Some one has said that

the Lord does not estimate us by the actual level of our spiritual attainment, but rather by the amount of the real moral movement there is in our lives. We must never be content to stop in our progress toward a higher life with God. (Cf. Luke 18: 9-14.)

The spiritual growth and development which is possible for and expected of God's people is expressed by Paul in these words: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. 1: 9, 10.) The secret of the Christian character in the inward renewal, or continual growth, of the spirit and mind which were made new at conversion. (Cf. John 3: 5; Tit. 3: 5, 6; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Eph. 2: 10.)

## The Text Explained

### Walking in Christ

(Col. 2: 6)

*As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.* The term "walk," as used by Paul in relation to Jesus, indicates zeal and fidelity. The reception of Christ implies the acceptance of an offer, or, perhaps, the entertainment of a guest. In the latter sense, it is as if one is waiting at the door for the arrival of a guest; and in this case the guest is Christ Jesus the Lord. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3: 20.)

It will be helpful to us to learn something about the manner in which the Colossian brethren received the Lord Jesus; for that is the way in which all men must receive him. It must first of all be an act of the mind. (Cf. Acts 17: 11, 12.) This means that they were not blinded by prejudice, or imprisoned by bigotry; they did not refuse to think, but opened the windows and doors of their mind, so that the light and the glory which was without might come in. (Cf. 2 Cor. 4: 5, 6.) And they received him by an act of their heart, which means that they allowed their feelings which had been aroused by the gospel message to have honest play. (Cf. 1 John 4: 19.) Their reception of Christ was also an act of their will, which means that they resolved to put away all that which did not please him, and then gladly do that which he requires. (See Acts 2: 37-41.)

All who thusly receive Christ recognize him as Lord, and that means that their lives thereafter must be ordered according to his will. Paul's full statement to the Colossians is as follows: "As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." (Col. 2: 6, 7.) This means that they were to continue in the apostles' teaching, and order the entire range of their lives according to that which they were commanded. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19, 20; Acts 2: 42.) The term "walk" is

frequently used in the New Testament to indicate one's manner of life. (Cf. Eph. 5: 2; Rom. 14: 15.)

### God-Given Power

(Eph. 6: 10-18)

*Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.* The first thing that any child of God should learn is that he cannot live the Christian life by his own strength. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3: 16-19; cf. Phil. 4: 13; Col. 1: 11.) God, of course, will give his strength to any one who is willing to receive it. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13; James 1: 5-8.)

*Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* As life moves forward there comes to most of us a clearer view of its meaning, and of its intense importance. We are led to realize more and more that we are surrounded by many strange and hidden alien forces, and are harassed by numberless unseen foes. And it becomes increasingly apparent that the greater our effort to live a life which is pleasing to God (2 Cor. 5: 9), the greater is our danger of being assaulted by the evil one. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 12; 1 Pet. 4: 12-19.)

That which has just been said is true because Christ and the sinful world are diametrically opposed to each other. There is a life and death struggle in progress between them, with issues involved so far-reaching and the conflict so universal as to make impossible the exemption of any responsible human being from the contest. Every one therefore must

take a stand, either for or against the Lord. (Cf. Matt. 12: 30.) The fight, as may be seen from the text now under consideration, is a spiritual rather than a carnal one; and as such the armor and weapon must also be spiritual.

The soldier of the cross is a favorite figure with Paul, and it is interesting to go through the letters which he wrote to the Lord's people and observe the number of times he refers to the Christian soldier or the Christian warfare. The principal phase of army life is the conflict itself, but closely related to it are the equipment, training, and attitude of the individual soldiers which are so essential to a successful warfare. It is to these last named phases of the question that we are to direct our attention today.

*Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.* This is plainly the responsibility of each individual Christian. The fight is on; and while God will furnish all that is needed to overcome the evil one, each person must make the appropriation for his own needs. And it should be observed that nothing short of "the whole armor of God" will suffice for a successful prosecution of the enemy and to be able to stand.

*Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.* This is the third time that the word "stand" appears in the passage now before us, and the idea is to stand firm or hold one's ground. The term "withstand" (verse 13), a compound word, signifies to set oneself against, oppose, or resist. The word "therefore" assigns the reason for the stand, because the fight is on and the enemy is great. It should be observed that no provisions have been made for retreat on the part of the Christian soldier. He is commanded to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on the life eternal. (See 1 Tim. 6: 12; cf. 2 Tim. 4: 6-8; Luke 9: 62; 2 Pet. 2: 20-22.)

*"Having girded your loins with truth."* The girdle was not a mere ornament, but was an essential part of the soldier's equipment. Placed

around his loins, it supported his sword, and was useful in keeping his armor and clothing in place. Paul's figure, of course, was based on the Roman soldier of his day. The application to the Christian soldier is with reference to the state of his heart as it respects the truth of God—the practical acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Christ, or the agreement of our convictions with his revelation. (Cf. John 8: 31, 32.)

*"Having put on the breastplate of righteousness."* As its name indicates, this part of the soldier's armor was worn over his breast and served to protect his vital organs. "Righteousness" is used here in the sense of moral rectitude, or correctness in thinking and feeling and acting. (Cf. Prov. 4: 23; 1 Thess. 5: 8; 1 John 3: 7, 10.)

*"Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace."* The soldier who makes a determined stand against the enemy must have his feet protected. This makes it possible for him to move with quick and certain step. (Cf. Isa. 52: 7.) To be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace is to have a cheerful and willing attitude of mind which gives a spirit of courageous readiness for the battle with evil. This state of mind is produced by the gospel, which is the gospel of peace. (Cf. Rom. 5: 1ff.)

*Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one* In addition to those parts of the armor which were to be worn on the body, an essential part of the soldier's equipment was the shield. The Roman shield was oblong in shape and was large enough to afford protection for the whole body. It was carried on the left arm and was held in place by means of a handle. An ordinary shield was about four feet long and two and one half feet wide. The shield of the Christian soldier is faith, or a conviction which makes him sensitive to holy influences which neutralize the power of temptation and evil influences. Such faith enlists the direct help of God in overcoming these evil powers. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13; 2 Pet. 2: 9; James 1: 2-8.)

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* A different

original word is introduced here, as well as a difference in grammatical construction. The word for "take" in verse 17 is *dechomoi*, while in verses 13 and 16 the term is *analam-bano*. Verse 16 has the participial form, while verse 17 has the direct imperative. In the latter instance the idea is to *take up* or *receive* something. The Christian soldier must put on the armor, that is, he must gird his loins, put on the breastplate, shoe his feet, and take up the shield; but there is also something which he must *receive* from the divine side—viz:

*"The helmet of salvation."* (Cf. 1 Thess. 5: 8—"the hope of salvation.") This knowledge of salvation enables the Christian soldier to hold up his head with joy and confidence, and it comes to him as a result of the assurance of the Scriptures. (Cf. Eph. 2: 8.)

*"The sword of the Spirit."* This sword is declared to be the word of God, and it is the weapon which the Spirit himself puts into the hand of the Christian soldier. (See 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

*With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.* Salmond (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*) notes that this clause is a further explanation of the manner in which the injunction "stand therefore" is to be carried out. This great requirement of standing firm and ready for the combat can be made good only when prayer—constant, earnest, and spiritual prayer, is added to the equipment already referred to. Williams observes that every phase of prayer must be used to rout the enemy. (Cf. Phil. 4: 6, 7.) Prayer and watchfulness must always be combined. No one can read this section of our lesson text without being impressed with the growth and development of the child of God.

### The End in View

(2 Pet. 3: 18)

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* The New Testament repeatedly refers to Christian character as

a matter of growth. Sometimes, as Hastings points out, the growth is architectural—the growth of the building; sometimes it is physiological, Christ being the head, and we growing up into him in all things; sometimes it is generic growth, as in the case of the vine which brings forth more and more fruit under proper pruning and culture. In short, the idea of a developing life runs through the whole New Testament, and has every variety of exemplification. Someone has said that the capacity for growth is that which, more than anything else, distinguishes one mind from another.

This section of our text should be read in the full light of its context. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things [verses 8-13], give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Pet. 3: 14-18.)

The growth enjoined here does not mean *into* the grace and knowledge of Christ, but, being already in his favor and possession of some knowledge of him, we are to continue our growth in that favor and knowledge. This is obvious when verses 17 and 18 are read together. "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

*To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.* The doxology.

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, places, and persons.

#### Introduction

How do we know that Christian people are expected to grow?  
Why is it so necessary that the soul of man grow and develop?  
The Golden Text  
Why is this passage important as a golden text?  
Along what lines did Jesus advance?  
What is the connection between life and growth?  
How do the Pharisee and the publican of Luke, 18: 9-14 illustrate this principle?  
What is the secret of Christian character?

#### Walking In Christ

What is the significance of the term "walk" as used here?  
In what sense do people receive Christ?  
How is this reception brought about?  
Discuss each of the three major steps in this process.  
Give the practical sense in which people walk in Christ.

#### God-Given Power

What is the first thing that any child of God should learn?  
Discuss Paul's statement to the Ephesians regarding this.  
To whom does God give his strength?  
Give reason for your answer.  
What view comes before us as life moves forward?  
Why is this true?  
What great responsibility rests upon every responsible child of God?

What use did Paul make of the Roman soldier of his day?  
What are some of the phases of army life which Paul emphasized?  
What exhortation is given to the Lord's people?  
What is the meaning of the terms "stand" and "withstand"?  
Why is no provision made for a retreat?  
What does the New Testament say about those who turn back?  
What does it mean to gird the loins with truth?  
What is the breastplate of righteousness?  
In what way may one shoe his feet for this great conflict?  
What is the shield of faith and how does one take it?  
What difference is noted in the terms "take" in verses 13, 16, 17?  
What is it that we "receive" from the divine side? and why?  
What use is to be made of the "helmet" and the "sword"?  
What place does prayer have in this great conflict?

#### The End in View

Point out some of the figures, which illustrate the growth of Christian character.  
What does the capacity for growth show regarding any individual?  
Discuss the full context of this section of the lesson text.  
What use did Peter make of some of Paul's writings?  
In what are the Lord's people exhorted to grow?  
What is meant by "grace" and "knowledge"?  
What is the difference between growing "into" and growing "in" the grace and knowledge of Christ?  
How do we know to which Peter had reference?

## Lesson III—October 15, 1961

# THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Lesson Text

1 Cor. 0:19, 20; 9:24-27; Gal. 6:7, 8

19 Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own;

20 For ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

24 Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain.

25 And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they *do it* to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air:

27 But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things."* (1 Cor. 9: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 42: 1-5.

### Daily Bible Readings

October 9. M.....	The Nazarite Vow (Num. 6: 1-8)
October 10. T.....	Abstinence for the Sake of Others (1 Cor. 8: 4-13)
October 11. W.....	A Temperate Family (Jer. 35: 1-11)
October 12. T.....	Warning of Wrong Influence (Hab. 2: 15-20)
October 13. F.....	Moderation Enjoined (Phil. 4: 1-10)
October 14. S.....	Rewards and Penalties (Jer. 35: 12-19)
October 15. S.....	A Worthy Example (Dan. 5: 1-6)

TIME.—Both First Corinthians and Galatians were written in A.D. 57.

PLACES.—First Corinthians was written in Ephesus; Galatians, in Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and those to whom he wrote.

### Introduction

Many who study this lesson today will recall the time when every few months a *temperance* lesson was considered. It was difficult in those days for many to think about "temperance" without thinking of abstinence from strong drink. That, of course, was included, but the subject of temperance includes much more. Temperance is a New Testament subject, and its over-all meaning is "self-control." A very simple definition of self-control is to hold oneself within due limits with respect to everything with which he is concerned.

There is a very close connection between the health of the body and the well-being of the spirit or soul of man; and it is for that reason that our physical health has a very important place in the study of the Scriptures. When John wrote Gaius, he said, "Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospered." (3 John 2.) Our lesson for today is in reality a temperance lesson or a lesson in self-control. It is in this way alone that one can take the necessary steps to insure the health of his body. It is possible, of course, for great souls to dwell in bodies which are not well, but that is the exception rather than the rule.

One of the finest examples of guarding the health of the body, so that greater service can be rendered to God, is that of Daniel and his three friends who had been taken from Judaea into Babylonian cap-

tivity. The king was anxious for them to become useful to him as courtiers, and he evidently felt that he was doing them a favor when he ordered that they be provided with royal food and drink during the time of their training. "And the king appointed for them a daily portion of the king's dainties, and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years; that at the end thereof they should stand before the king." (Dan. 1: 5.)

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." This was pleasing to God, and after the matter was duly considered by the officer in charge, the request was granted for a ten-day period. "So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse." (Read Dan. 1: 8-16.)

It is the duty of Christian people to guard their health as best they can; for then they will have a better opportunity to enjoy life here, and can render more effective service in the kingdom of Christ while here among men.

### The Golden Text

The portion of the lesson, being a part of the lesson text, will be considered in its regular order.

## The Text Explained

### The Body Is Sacred

(1 Cor. 6: 19, 20)

*Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God?* This section of the lesson is a part of Paul's instruction to the Corinthian brethren regarding the abuse of Christian liberty. (See 1 Cor. 6: 12-20.) His whole idea was to show that the body, having been redeemed by Christ, must not be used in any way which is contrary to his will. Its sacredness is seen when we consider the fact that the body of the individual Christian is used as a dwellingplace for the Holy Spirit in precisely the same way that the church as the body of Christ is. (See 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17.) In this latter passage the apostle says, "Know ye not that ye [plural] are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye."

Hall L. Calhoun notes that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a Christian is taught as plainly as any other truth found in the Bible. This text makes it clear that the Spirit does dwell in our bodies. But this is not to be understood in any miraculous or mysterious sense. It simply means that our bodies, along with our whole being, have been redeemed by Christ, that they belong to him, and that they are to be used as the Spirit who has taken up his abode in them directs. This, again, does not mean that the Spirit acts independently of his word in dealing with our bodies, but that he gives instruction through his revealed will regarding the way we should live. (Cf. Rom. 8: 2, 14.) The body is made a suitable dwelling place for the Spirit when one obeys the gospel. (See Acts 2: 36-39; 5: 32; Gal. 3: 14.) This last passage says, "That upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," literally, *through the faith*, that is, through the gospel. (Cf. Acts 6: 7 where "the faith" clearly means the gospel.)

*And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God*

*therefore in your body.* God placed his stamp upon our being, including our bodies, at creation; and then after the fall, he re-stamped the same image upon us when he created us anew in Christ. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.) Just as certain as the Christian belongs to Christ, just that certain does his body belong to him. No man, therefore, has the right to use his body in any way which will be displeasing to the Lord. But it is not enough to live a negative life; we are plainly told in the text now before us to *glorify God in our bodies*. We can do this only by using them as God directs that we should.

With a motive like this before us, the faithful follower of Christ will endeavor to keep his body in such a manner and treat his body in such a way as to result in its being prepared for the best service which it can render. It is not possible, of course, for every one to have a robust body and perfect in every way; but it is the duty of every child of God to do the best he can with the body he does have. This is true because the body is the indispensable instrument of the spirit which dwells in it, that is, the human spirit. No one can do his full duty in God's service with his spirit alone; his body must also be brought into service. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12: 1, 2.)

### Self-Discipline Is Needed

(1 Cor. 9: 24-27)

*Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain.* Paul frequently spoke of the Christian life under the figure of a race. (Cf. 2 Tim. 4: 7; Heb. 12: 1, 2.) In the text now before us, he apparently had in mind the famous Greek athletic contests which were held near Corinth. These contests required great preparation on the part of those who participated in

them, and notwithstanding the little worth of the prize, they attracted many whenever they were held; and we may be sure that the most of them entered into the spirit of the occasion with all the power of their being.

The contest to which Paul referred in the text now under consideration presented both a comparison and a contrast. First the comparison: Both the athlete and the Christian enrolled in the list of the participants; both trained for the games; both actually took part in them; and both looked forward to receiving the prize. On the side of the contrast, one race is physical, while the other is spiritual; only one in the group received the material prize, while all faithful Christians will receive the spiritual reward; and there is, of course, a vast difference in the value of the prizes which were and are offered. With this picture before us, Paul urges every child of God to run, with the view of obtaining the reward. (Cf. Phil. 3: 12-14.)

*And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.* In the Grecian games already referred to, the preparation required long and severe periods of intensive training, during which a particular diet was enforced. We are told that these preparatory exercises extended over a period of ten months, during the last of which they were conducted under the supervision of appointed officers. (See *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, Vol. I, p. 865f.)

To exercise self-control is to practice self-restraint, to submit oneself to law rather than to his own desires, to sacrifice pleasures for an end—in short, to gain the mastery over self, in order to win the approval of a Higher Authority. The Greeks did all of this in order to win a corruptible crown, but they considered what they were doing to be one of the greatest of virtues, that of temperance or self-control; and it is interesting to note that while they were giving themselves to it, they became the masters of the art of living.

The writer of Hebrews (12: 1, 2) referred to the Christian race when he said, "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great

a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 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." Thus, even in the case of Jesus himself, there was no sacrifice too great for him to make in order to reach the goal before him.

With the idea of "self-control" still before us, the inspired penman exhorts, "Let us . . ." (1) lay aside every weight, (2) the sin which doth so easily beset us, (3) run with patience the race that is set before us, and (4) looking unto Jesus. The "weights" were not necessarily sins, but burdens or encumbrances. The man who runs in a race successfully must deny himself many things which are good and lawful within themselves, because they hinder him from doing his best. The marginal reading for "doth so easily beset us" is *doth closely cling to us, or, is admired of many*. Vincent observes that the reference is to "a sin which readily or easily encircles and entangles the Christian runner, like a long, loose robe clinging to his limbs." But if one is set on running the race which is set before him, while always looking to Jesus, he will find that it is in reality no sacrifice for him to put aside those things which hinder and encumber him.

*I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.* Paul still has the figure of Greek athletes before him. Phillips renders this passage in these words: "I run the race then with determination. I am no shadowboxer; I really fight! I am my body's sternest master, for fear that when I have preached to others I should myself be disqualified."

There was nothing uncertain about Paul's life as a Christian. This was true because he always made it his aim to please God. (See 2 Cor. 5: 9.) As he neared the end of the way he could say with confidence, "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 loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.) When the apostle affirmed, as Moffatt translates the passage, "I do not plant my blows upon the empty air," he was emphasizing the fact that life has a purpose.

To state the same thing in another way, the Christian life demands courage, fervent devotion, and resources, such as the competitors in the games at Corinth employed. The fight in which the Christian must engage is not a sham fight about which he can be careless, and neither is it a practice during which he can hit out at an imaginary opponent; the child of God is up against real opposition, and to waste his energies in a make-believe contest will be fatal. Christianity is an intense and earnest matter, and we shall emerge from its challenge either as victors or victims; either with shame or with glory. The text now before us presents to us in a vivid way the vigorous, active, and earnest side of the Christian life; and unless we give attention to that which is said, that is, unless we are willing to make the effort to control our bodily appetites and desires, we shall, in the words of Paul, as Goodspeed renders them, find that after I have called others to the contest I may not be qualified myself.

Someone has pointed out the fact that a false emphasis has often been placed on certain aspects of Christianity, which has tended to make it unattractive and even repugnant to young people. There are many among the youth of our day who apparently have the impression that the religion which is offered them is little more than a crutch for the lame, and not a weapon for the strong; that it is a comfort for those in trouble and sorrow, but has little to offer to healthy and happy souls. This, of course, is certainly not true; for Christianity has everything to offer young and eager lives who are ready to respond to a challenge to sacrifice and service. No one understands Christianity who fails to realize that

it is more than a refuge from all of life's troubles. It is, on the contrary, the impulse of every high and courageous enterprise, the trumpet call to both quest and conquest.

### God's Laws Are Inexorable

(Gal. 6: 7, 8)

Be *not* deceived; God is not mocked: *far 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.* Paul's words in this section of our lesson point out to every man the two great alternatives of life. No one can live in this world without sowing to one or the other of these antitheses, as may be seen by reading verses 16-24 of the preceding chapter, a passage which sets forth in detail the results of living according to the flesh and according to the Spirit.

"But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof."

All responsible people are sowing, either to the flesh or to the Spirit; and Paul warns that no one should deceive himself into thinking that he can escape the inexorable consequences of God's eternal laws: all people shall reap as they sow. The original word for "mocked" (*mukterizo*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Thayer defines it to mean "to turn up the nose [cf. muk-

ter, the nose] or sneer at; to mock, deride." In the passage now before us it means that the principles of divine administration cannot be

treated with contempt or successfully evaded. This, of course, has a direct bearing on the Christian and his physical health.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What is a "temperance" lesson and its value to those who study the Bible?  
What is the basic meaning of "temperance"?  
In what way are the welfare of the body and soul related?  
What lesson can we get from the example of Daniel?  
What duty do Christian people have with reference to their health?

#### The Body Is Sacred

Carefully define and discuss the meaning of "sacred." See dictionary.  
Give the setting of this section of our lesson.  
In what sense does the Holy Spirit dwell in Christians?  
What effect should the consciousness of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit have on Christians?  
How may one know that the Spirit dwells in him? Discuss in detail.  
What use should God's children make of their bodies?  
What did the apostle Paul say about this?

#### Self-Discipline Is Needed

In what way did Paul frequently liken the Christian life to a race?  
Why would he often use the Grecian games to illustrate his teaching?  
What "comparisons" and "contrasts" did he present in this lesson?  
What motive should prompt every Christian in running the race?  
Give Paul's own personal illustration in this connection.  
What does every sincere contestant in a race do before he starts to run?  
Tell something of the preliminary training which was required?

How does all of this apply to a Christian?  
What motive should always govern people in exercising self-control?  
What does Heb. 12: 1, 2 teach regarding the Christian race?  
What great example did Jesus leave for us?  
What four points did the writer of Hebrews set forth in this connection?  
What are included in "weights" and why lay them aside?  
What is a "besetting sin"?  
Does everyone have the same besetting sin? Give reasons for your answer.  
What does it mean to run the race with "patience"?  
How may one look to Jesus while running the race?  
What is the meaning of the "race that is set before us"?  
In what way did Paul say that he did not run and fight?  
How may one run "uncertainly" and "beat the air"?  
What was Paul's attitude toward his body?  
What benefit would accrue from this?  
How did Paul demonstrate that there was nothing "uncertain" about his life as a Christian?  
What are some of the qualities which are demanded of Christian living?  
What is certain to be the result of the contest, one way or the other?  
Why did Paul say he took such great precautions in these matters?  
What false emphasis have some tried to place on some aspects of Christianity?  
Show that this is not true.

#### God's Laws Are Inexorable

What warning does Paul give here?  
Why do people reap that which they sow?  
Discuss the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

### Lesson IV—October 22, 1961

## THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS DAILY WORK

### Lesson Text

Mark 6:1-3; John 5:17; Acts 20: 33-35; 2 Thess. 3: 6-12

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 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?

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.

17 But Je'-sus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work.

33 I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Je'-sus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Je'-sus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

8 Neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you:

9 Not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat.

11 For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies.

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Je'-sus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." (Rom. 12: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 121.

### Daily Bible Readings

October 16. M.....	The Master Workman (Psalm 8)
October 17. T.....	Idleness Condemned (2 Thess. 3: 6-15)
October 18. W.....	God Worked (Gen. 2: 1-3)
October 19. T.....	Christ Worked (John 9: 1-5)
October 20. F.....	Work to Help Others (Eph. 4: 28-32)
October 21. S.....	Unprofitable Servant (Luke 12: 41-48)
October 22. S.....	Paul Worked to Support Himself (Acts 20: 33-35)

TIME.—Mark and John, A.D. 28; Acts, A.D. 60; Second Thessalonians, A.D. 50-52.

PLACES.—Mark, Nazareth; John, Jerusalem; Acts, Miletus; Second Thessalonians, Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the Jews, Paul, the Ephesian elders, and the Thessalonian brethren.

### Introduction

Any one who reads the Bible knows that God ordained work for men from the beginning. (See Gen. 2: 15.) It has well been said that occupation was one of the pleasures of Paradise, and we cannot be happy without it today. William Cowper assures us that

Absence of occupation is not rest;  
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.

Thomas Carlyle, a man who knew the meaning of work, once said, "There is a perennial nobleness and even a sacredness in work." The forces and factors which bless men always come from their labors. The things which we prize the most are the things which come to us as a result of our efforts. Then, with Longfellow, let us say,

Let us then be up and doing,

With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.

One has only to read the Bible in order to see what the Lord thinks about those who engage in honest work. One of the finest things said about the worthy woman of Proverbs is this, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." (See Prov. 31: 13-19.) The other side of the question may be seen by considering Paul's instruction to Timothy and the Thessalonians. (See 1 Tim. 5: 9-13; 2 Thess. 3: 10.) It is good for us that we are surrounded by compelling circumstances; for life has no intention of allowing us to live in idleness. She is continually surrounding us with conditions which require that we be active; she is determined to keep us busy.

Thoreau once said, "It is not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is, What are we busy about?" As soon as a young person says to himself, and really means it, "I am going to be a doctor, lawyer, minister, engineer, teacher, farmer, businessman, mechanic, carpenter, accountant," or some other useful person, he automatically integrates his whole life in a definite direction. He has an aim before him. "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he"

(Prov. 23: 7) is a statement which is applicable in all walks of life. That which one thinks does make a difference. Dr. Walter R. Courtenay notes that it does indeed make a difference how you think about your work, and what you think makes it good or bad, worthwhile or burdensome. He says that he can easily imagine a garbage collector saying, "My job? Why I'm helping the doctors and nurses keep our city clean and healthy. I'm a part of the health service."

## The Golden Text

*"In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."* The twelfth chapter of Romans has been called *The Little Bible*. It may not be the greatest chapter in the Holy Scriptures, but it is certainly one of the most valuable. It is full of counsel and precepts for every day living. It has an impressive beginning and a triumphant close; and there is a multi-linked chain of counsel, admonition, and exhortation in between. The verse which serves as our golden text for today is a short summary of the Christian life. That life has three relationships—to the world around us, to our hearts within us, and to Christ above us—and in this text we have a word for each.

*"In diligence not slothful."* This diligence does not apply to a section of one's life, but to the whole. The reference is not so much to the work, as to the worker. (Cf. Eccles. 9: 10.) It describes the manner in which our work should be done: "As for diligence in doing our duty, let us not be slothful—let us really do it diligently." The injunction is a protest against indolence in Christian conduct, in any area of one's life. Many are diligent in business and pleasure, but slothful in religious duties. It is more tragic for a Christian worker to be drowsy at his task,

than for a watchman to fall asleep on duty.

*"Fervent in spirit."* Here we pass from the outward activity of life to the inward spring or motive power out of which this outward activity must flow, and without which it is almost certain to fail. The word "fervent" means to be glowing or boiling like water. This should be our attitude toward God and men. It takes boiling water to produce steam, and steam drives the piston rods of the mighty power-houses of our national life. To be fervent in spirit is to be filled with enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is indispensable to success in any line of worthy endeavor.

*"Serving the Lord."* This is the supreme motive of the Christian life. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 9.) We should seek to be more than merely "church members." (See Matt. 7: 21; 1 Cor. 15: 58.) The expression "serving the Lord" means, according to Thayer, to obey his commandments and render to him the service which is due him. (Cf. Matt. 28: 18-20; Luke 17: 10.) But it is impossible to serve the Lord acceptably, without serving our fellow men. (See Matt. 25: 31ff.) No one who sincerely endeavors to carry out the great commission which Christ gave to his disciples will fail in his duty either to God or man, in a very great measure.

## The Text Explained

### The Divine Precedent for Work

(Mark 6: 1-3; John 5: 17)

*And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 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? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him.*

This portion of our lesson for today tells of the Lord's visit to his former home in Nazareth sometime after beginning his first Galilean ministry. The major part of the first year of his ministry was spent in Judaea, as may be learned from the first four chapters of John; and it appears that the change in the residence from Nazareth to Capernaum took place about the time he began his Galilean ministry. (See Matt. 4: 12, 13, cf. Luke 4: 14-16.)

So far as the record goes, Jesus had lived in Nazareth from his early childhood until he was about thirty years old. (Cf. Luke 3: 21-23.) The parents of Jesus, Joseph and Mary, were devout Jews (Luke 2: 41), and they not only worked themselves, but also taught their children to work. It is said that any Jew who did not teach his son a trade in effect taught him to steal. Joseph and Jesus were both carpenters, and it is fair to assume that Jesus was taught that trade by Joseph. In commenting on this aspect of the life of Jesus, Hastings has the following to say:

"The word translated 'carpenter' is a more generic term than our English word. It conveys something more than the specific handicraft designated by the latter, and implies generally a fashioner of articles in wood. Jesus the carpenter was a maker of all such utensils as were useful in the house and in the field. Justin Martyr, who lived near to Christ's own times, tells us that he made ploughs and yokes, as well as the articles we include within the scope of carpentry. He was the fashioner of whatever tended to stability, order, and productiveness. Surely we may see something more than an accidental significance and appropriateness here! His calling was the symbol of the constructive and productive, as opposed to the destructive, principle in the world."

Some people seem to look upon the necessity for secular work as if it were an evil—if not a degradation, then at least a burden and a hindrance. They perhaps feel that they can hold on to their Christianity in spite of it, but they do not feel that it is any part of it or is any help to it. Under the influence of such a feeling, some would fain abandon their secular employment altogether,

and give themselves wholly to what they call a religious life, that is, to such duties as prayer, meditation, preaching, and such like. These, of course, are necessary occupations; but they do not make a man any more acceptable to God than those who follow the pursuits of honest toil for a livelihood for themselves, their dependents, and the help of those who may be in need. (Cf. Eph. 4: 28; 6: 5-8.)

*But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work.* This statement was made by Jesus to the Jews who were persecuting and seeking to kill him, because he had cured a sick man at Bethesda on the sabbath day. It is well to note that he did not meet their charge against him by pleading, as he did on a similar occasion, that he had performed a work of mercy. Instead, he lifted the whole question into a higher sphere, and told them that as God's Son he was only obeying the law of his Father.

Nothing could be further from the thoughts of worldlings than that Jehovah is a working God, but Jesus has changed all that. He teaches that God not only loves, but that he also works. He is first revealed to us as the Creator; and no sooner had he finished the earth for a habitation for man than the work of providence and redemption began. This, of course, is the story of the entire Bible, and we have the word of Christ that God continues to work, and so does he. Honest work, faithfully performed, is always a blessing, it matters not how one may view it; and if we are fortunate enough to reach heaven, we are assured that there "his servants shall serve him." (See Rev. 22: 3.)

### Apostolic Example

(Acts 20: 33-35)

*I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that mere with me. In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.* The words just quoted form the closing part of Paul's address to the Ephesian elders.

He was finishing his third missionary journey, and was hurrying to Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. (Read Acts 20: 13-38.) Inasmuch as Ephesus was off his route, he asked the elders of the church there to meet him in Miletus; and it was at the latter place that he delivered his address to them.

The words of the section of the lesson now before us are sometimes used as a basis for a lesson on giving; but when their real significance is understood, it will be seen that they were spoken for another purpose. Perhaps no violence is done to the Scriptures, if these words of Paul are used as a basis for preaching on giving; but when the facts in the case are carefully considered, it will be obvious that the apostle had something else in mind when he spoke them.

The words of Jesus which Paul quoted were by him rescued from oblivion; and they have as a result been preserved for the use of the Lord's people in every succeeding generation. (Cf. John 20: 30, 31; 21: 25.) In all the writings of the apostles to the Lord's people, Paul is the only one who ever made a direct quotation from Jesus; and he only made two. (See Acts 20: 35; 1 Cor. 11: 23-25.) But all the apostles, of course, made known that which Jesus wants men to do. (Cf. John 16: 13, 14; Gal. 1: 6-12.)

As already indicated, Paul used the words now before us to inspire the Ephesian elders to follow his example of serving. Such service had always been Paul's rule as a Christian; and in following that rule, he was but imitating the teaching and example of Jesus. (Cf. 2 Cor. 12: 14, 15; 2 Thess. 2: 7-9; Matt. 20: 28; 2 Cor. 8: 9.) Paul does not mean to teach that it is wrong for a gospel preacher to be supported financially in his work; he simply did not want it to be so in his case. His words are:

"If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the

temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: and I write not these things that it may be so done in my case; for it were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me. What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel." (1 Cor. 9: 11-18; cf. Acts 18: 1-3.)

### Work Is a Christian Obligation

(2 Thess. 3: 6-12)

*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.* Many Bible students are of the opinion that the idleness among the Thessalonian Christians was due to their expectation of the Lord's imminent return from heaven, which, if true, would make work on their part unnecessary, in their opinion. This view, however, is not certain, but for some reason some of the brethren in the newly formed church were not concerned with working. (Cf. 1 Thess. 4: 11, 12.) But whatever the cause for their idleness, it was contrary to the will of the Lord, and Paul commanded drastic action against all such by the faithful brethren. Any one who is able and who has the opportunity to work, and will not, does not deserve Christian fellowship. The "tradition" which Paul mentions was the instruction which the Thessalonians had received, both oral and written. (See 2 Thess. 2: 15.)

*For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: not*

because *we have not the right*, but to *make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us*. There is nothing more effective than a good example, when one desires to get over a lesson; and the apostle Paul, like his Lord, was always quick to make use of that method of teaching.

It has been said, and it is reasonable to suppose, that many of the early converts in Thessalonica were from the laboring classes; and since they were in many instances brought into competition with slave-labor, it was natural for some of them to look upon manual labor as being more or less degrading. This false view no doubt accounted for many of the parasites which were found in every large city. It was to correct this mistaken view and to restore labor to its proper dignity, along with Paul's desire to make the gospel free to those who did not understand that they should support gospel preachers, that he himself nearly always en-

gaged in some type of work (cf. Acts 18: 3; 2 Cor. 11: 7-12) to support himself and those who were with him.

*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.* This is a plain command to the church not to support people who will not work. A refusal to work when one is able and has the opportunity constitutes disorderly conduct, and that must not be encouraged by the Lord's people. Paul showed the new converts the right attitude by his example, but he also commanded and exhorted, that is, he united his authority with entreaty. A "busybody" is one who has no business of his own, but who meddles in other people's business.

## Questions for Discussion

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

Show how it is true that the Father and the Son still work.  
Show why honest work always brings a blessing to those who engage in it.

### Introduction

What place does work have in the life of mankind?  
How should people, then, look upon work?  
Show how work was regarded by the best people in the Bible.  
Why isn't it enough for one to be merely busy?  
How does one's thinking affect one's attitude toward his work?

When and under what circumstances did Paul speak the words of this section of our lesson?  
What was his purpose in speaking them?  
Why did Paul nearly always support himself in his preaching work?  
Did he mean to imply that this should always be done? Give reasons for your answer.

### Apostolic Example

### The Golden Text

Give an appraisal of the twelfth chapter of Romans.  
Show the appropriateness of the golden text for this lesson.  
Discuss each of its three parts:  
(1) In diligence not slothful.  
(2) Fervent in spirit.  
(3) Serving the Lord.

Why is unnecessary idleness on the part of Christians considered disorderly conduct?

What did Paul mean by "withdrawing" from such people?

What "tradition" did he refer to?  
Discuss the place and power of example in teaching.

Why did many of the people in Paul's day seem to have a low estimate of manual labor? (Cf. 1 Thess. 4: 11.)

Why did Paul so often call attention to his right to financial support, while preaching the gospel for nought?

What did Paul mean by saying not to let a man who will not work eat?

Should the same course be followed in the churches today? Give reasons for your answer.

What is a "busybody"?  
In what spirit did Paul give his command regarding them?

### The Divine Precedent for Work

Under what circumstances did Jesus visit Nazareth on the occasion of this lesson?  
Tell something of the conditions under which Jesus was brought up.  
What is implied by saying that Jesus was a carpenter?  
Why do some try to make a distinction between the effect of "secular" and "religious" work?  
Under what circumstances did Jesus say that his Father works?

Lesson V—October 29, 1961

THE CHRISTIAN AND RECREATION

Lesson Text

1 Tim. 4: 6-8; Mark 2: 18-20; 6: 30, 32

6 If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Je-sus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed *until now*:

7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables. And exercise thyself unto godliness:

8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.

18 And John's disciples and the Phar-i-sees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of

the Phar-i-sees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Je-sus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."* (Zech. 8: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 63: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

- October 23. M.....Strength Recovered (Isa. 40: 27-31)
- October 24. T.....Temperate Life (Dan. 5: 1-6)
- October 25. W.....Rest and Diversion (Mark 6: 30-34)
- October 26. T.....Sabbath for Man (Mark 2: 18-28)
- October 27. F.....Jesus at a Wedding (John 2: 1-11)
- October 28. S....."Think on These Things" (Phil. 4: 4-9)
- October 29. S.....Bodily Exercise (1 Tim. 4: 1-8)

TIME.—First Timothy, A.D. 65-67; Mark, A.D. 27, 28.

PLACES.—First Timothy, probably Philippi; Mark, Capernaum and the desert place northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Paul, Timothy, Jesus, his disciples, those of John, and the Pharisees.

Introduction

The term "recreation," as used in this study, refers to a change in occupation or an indulgence in diversions for the sake of relaxation or refreshment of body and mind. Neither the body nor the mind is capable of continuous and unlimited endurance. God made this principle known when he ordained the sabbath at the conclusion of the six days of creative work of Genesis 1 and 2. Jesus says (Mark 2: 27) that the sabbath was made for man, that is, for man as God designed and created him. When correctly understood, it will be seen that the idea behind the

principle of the sabbath is that of refreshment, both physical and spiritual.

Hall L. Calhoun notes that recreation, taken in the common sense of the term, is one of the most important phases of present-day life; and few people who stop to think this issue through will want to find fault with his statement. The body of man finds the rest which it needs, not by doing nothing, for idleness is never true rest, but in changing occupations; and the same is true of the mind and the spirit. One of the chief reasons why the Lord's day of

the New Testament means so little to so many people, is that they have never found themselves in the spirit of the day. When the Lord's day is properly observed, the spirit gains new strength, as raised toward heaven it contemplates the unseen, and looks up to God instead of being engrossed in the material. Lord Macaulay expressed the matter in these words: "On Sunday man, the machine of machines, is repairing and winding up, so that he returns to his labors on Monday with clear intellect, with livelier spirits, and with renewed vigor." Or, as Matthew Hale puts it,

A Sunday well spent  
Brings a week of content,  
And health for the toils of to-  
morrow.  
But a Sunday profaned,

### The Golden Text

"*The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.*" Those who are familiar with the history of the Israelites of the Old Testament are aware of the fact that they suffered greatly as a result of their idolatry. They were finally taken into captivity, and were deprived of the homelife which could have been theirs had they remained faithful to the Lord. But Jehovah did not forget his people, and when their hearts returned to him, he returned to them. In speaking of their restoration, he reminded them that their old people would be permitted to live out their days in peace, and that their young people should know the happiness which is natural to children. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for every age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." (Zech. 8: 4, 5.)

It is as natural for normal boys and girls to play, as it is for them to eat. That is God's way of giving them the exercise they need for healthy growth. And what is true of them is also true of adults to a large ex-

Whate'er may be gained,

**Is a certain precursor of sorrow.**

The laws and conditions of man's physical life and health are such as to make periods of recreation absolutely essential to the proper and continued performance of the labors which most people have to endure. When the body is properly cared for it will be much easier to have the kind of foundation upon which the intellectual and the spiritual are to arise. It was the apostle Paul who asked, "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) Recreation is necessary, if the body is to continue to function as it should.

It has already been pointed out that the strain on the body, mind, and spirit of the average person requires periods of recreation; and what can provide that recreation better than times of wholesome diversion from the ordinary works for a livelihood? All teachers of God's word have used children to illustrate the attitude of mind which must characterize those who learn (cf. Mark 10: 15); and that is precisely what our golden text does regarding the question of recreation. If left to themselves, boys and girls are going to get their recreation.

There is another important lesson which children can teach older people, namely, the difference between work and play. Notwithstanding the fact that play sometimes requires more energy than work, it is always easier to get them to play than it is to get them to work. Why the difference? It is in the *spirit* in which the thing is done. As Horace Bushnell once said, "Work is activity *for* an end, and play is activity *as* an end." Behind our work is duty and constraint; but there is no force like that back of play. Both work and play require effort, but in the case of the latter there is liberty in the effort, rather than compulsion.

## The Text Explained

### Bodily Exercise—Its Relative Importance

(1 Tim. 4: 6-8)

*If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed until now.* "These things" refer to the truths stated in verses 4, 5, in opposition to the errors foretold in verses 1-3, all of which should be carefully read. It is by teaching the truth and warning against error that one can be a good minister of Christ Jesus. The word "nourished," in the original, is the present passive participle, and indicates continuous nutrition on the part of a minister who thus does his duty. The "words of the faith," which is the "good doctrine," are the words of the gospel. (Cf. 1 Tim. 6: 3; 2 Tim. 1: 13.) To be nourished with the word of God was not new to Timothy; that process had characterized him since childhood. (See 2 Tim. 1: 5; 3: 15.)

*But refuse profane and old wives' fables.* That is, refrain from and reject all kinds of error, both with reference to its practice and those who propagate it. Some practices which lead away from godliness have no better foundation than the fictitious inventions of old women who enjoy repeating them and passing them on to others.

*And exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.* Bible students are not agreed as to the precise meaning which Paul meant to convey by "bodily exercise." Some hold that he was speaking of physical exercise, as that expression is generally understood; while others are of the opinion that he referred to the ascetic practices of the false teachers mentioned in verses 1-3. The latter viewpoint is probably the one he had in mind, since that was the question under consideration; but no violence would be done to the passage to apply it to the physical exercise of the body. The thing which Paul wanted Timothy to do was to put forth the necessary effort, with the zeal and deter-

mination of the one who was concerned only with the body, to attain unto godliness, that is, to put into practice the piety of the Christian life.

The word "exercise" is from the Greek *gymnaze* (compare our word gymnasium), and as used here it refers to the practice whereby one seeks to become godly. It is as if Paul had said to Timothy, "Let your self-discipline be with a view to godliness, rather than the exercise which are concerned only with the body. The apostle elsewhere concedes that bodily discipline is profitable in one's efforts to increase in godliness (cf. Acts 13: 3; 1 Cor. 7: 5, 7; 9: 25-27), but he does not teach that these things are to be regarded as an end within themselves. Bodily exercise therefore does have some value, but godliness itself, which is but another name for piety or the Christian life, is valuable for all things. It makes a better person out of the individual in all respects, whether with reference to this life, or the life which is to come.

People today, as a rule, do not have to deal with such ascetic practices as those which confronted Timothy, but they do have to deal with "bodily exercise" in the sense of physical exercise and the discipline of the body in order to fit it for greater and better accomplishments. This is what we usually think of when we think of recreation; although, as we shall see further on in this study, recreation is also concerned with that self-discipline which calls for the denials of certain things which would make impossible the refreshment which we seek. Phillips appears to have grasped the true meaning of the passage now under consideration, when he rendered it in these words: "Take time and trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit. Bodily fitness has a certain value, but spiritual fitness is essential, both for this present life and for the life to come."

### The Place of Fasting

(Mark 2: 18-20)

*And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's*

*disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.*

When we think of fasting we naturally turn our thoughts to the denial of food to the body, and of the affliction of the soul. The only fast which was authorized and specifically commanded in the Old Testament was the one which took place on the day of atonement. (See Lev. 23: 26-32, where the expression "afflict" your souls is a translation of the Hebrew *anah*—"be humbled by fasting." *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Brown, Driver, and Briggs.) This may cause some to wonder as to what place fasting can have in the subject of recreation.

There are at least two lessons which we should learn regarding the relationship between fasting and recreation. (1) *Its time element.* Jesus makes it plain that fasting must come at an appropriate time, and for a specific purpose; and when these facts are taken into consideration, it can readily be seen that fasting can have an important effect in the proper conditioning of the body, mind, and spirit. This is especially true when we consider the relationship between recreation and godliness, as pointed out in the previous section of our lesson.

*The second lesson is with reference to the purpose of fasting.* True religion (godliness) enables a man to "restrain" and to "refrain." Through it he learns to say "No" to the present, so that he may say "Yes" to that which is imperishable. Self-imposed discipline is absolutely essential if one wants to qualify himself for greater things. (Cf. 1 Cor. 9: 27.) The Christian therefore is able to restrain an imperious appetite like hunger, in order to devote more attention to the development of his spiritual nature; and in that way greater emphasis is placed on the higher things of life. This attitude, as well as the practice which grows out of it, is needed in modern life; for many of us are slaves to our appe-

tites. It can be seen therefore that fasting, according to the teaching of the New Testament, does have a very vital place in the question of the over-all subject of recreation. And while true religion enables a man to restrain those desires which will not be for his best interest, rather than to resign himself to them, Jesus warns that one may spoil this fine act of physical restraint by using it for the purpose of spiritual show. (See Matt. 6: 16-18.)

Fasting, in its practical sense, is a partial or total abstinence from food for a certain period of time, as a token of religious humiliation, or as a means of spiritual discipline. The connection between fasting and spiritual life may be briefly expressed as follows: The man whose body which is continuously filled with material food cannot see and appreciate spiritual things as he should. (Cf. Luke 16: 19ff.) When we are continually thinking of material food, we not only are in danger of injuring our bodies, we are also prone to forget about the interest of the soul. Instead of being an arbitrary requirement therefore, fasting is a natural and constitutional necessity. It is a gracious law and provision of the human constitution that its nervous and vital energies may, to a great extent, be concentrated and directed to the accomplishment of one given object; its other functions being, in the meantime, either wholly or partially suspended. Yes, fasting and recreation are closely related, and when they are made to serve for our higher development, they are indispensable.

### **Rest Is Likewise Essential**

(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. [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. The apostles had just finished their first tour of Galilee, and having returned to Capernaum, they gave their report of their deeds and teaching to*

Jesus. Their work had been strenuous, and the Lord knew that they needed rest and relaxation. He wanted them to go to a place where they could enjoy a quiet period with him, free from the crowded areas where people were continually coming and going, and where they had no opportunity even to eat their daily food in peace.

Many people have a one-sided, incomplete notion regarding Christianity. In their view of the matter, the emphasis is placed upon the continuous appeal to our sense of duty, a constant claim upon our moral nature, as the effort is made to arouse, stimulate, awaken, and encourage us to greater efforts in the Lord's work. The gospel, of course, does make these demands and sends forth these calls, 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.

When Jesus therefore asked his disciples to go to a place where they could be alone, and where they could rest from their exacting duties, he was but doing for them that which would result in their being better prepared for other work which lay ahead of them. 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, stimu-

late our minds, and prolong our usefulness here upon the earth. We should never forget that it was Jesus who said to his weary disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile."

In commenting on this request of Jesus to his disciples, Hastings notes that it is no wonder that the modern man is so often a bundle of quivering nerves. He tries to keep up a strenuous pace, and finds that he is not equal to the strain. Christ is much more considerate of the workers than they are of themselves. He goes on the principle that prevention is much better than cure. And if one will only stop and think, he will not have any difficulty in seeing that this is the way to a better life. This is true, as has already been pointed out, because the spiritual life itself has a physical basis, and no one is necessarily made more spiritual simply by becoming an invalid. The body and the mind are so closely related that when one becomes run down the other often collapses out of sheer sympathy.

Every normal person should endeavor to live a strenuous life, but he should try to live it sanely; and the only way that can be done is to take intervals of repose, seasons of rest, and times of recuperation and refreshment. Recreation should have a place in every life.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, places, and persons.

### Introduction

What is the meaning of the term "recreation"?  
What principle shows the scripturalness of the subject? Discuss.  
Why is the subject of recreation such an important one?  
Why does the Lord's day mean so little to so many people?  
What is its connection with the subject of recreation?  
What makes the question of recreation so essential?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text spoken?  
Discuss the appropriateness of this golden text.  
What are some of the lessons we learn from children?  
What is the essential difference between work and play?

Bodily Exercise—Its Relative importance  
Of what "things" was Paul speaking to Timothy?  
What makes a man a "good minister"? Discuss.  
How is one "nourished" in the words of the faith?  
What are "old wives' fables" and how regard them? Why?  
How may one exercise himself unto godliness? Give reasons for your answer.  
What is meant by "godliness"?  
What did Paul mean by "bodily exercise"?  
What are some of the benefits of bodily exercise?  
Why is godliness so much more important? Discuss Phillips' rendering of the passage now under consideration.

### The Place of Fasting

Of what do people usually think when they consider the subject of fasting?  
What is the Old Testament meaning of the command to fast?  
What two important lessons should we learn from this section of the lesson?  
What is the relation between fasting and recreation?

Why is it sometimes essential to refrain from food, etc.?  
 Discuss the place of self-discipline in the Christian life.  
 What is the practical meaning of fasting?  
 Should Christians fast? Give reasons for your answer.  
 Why isn't fasting specifically commanded in the New Testament?  
 What, then, did Jesus teach on the subject? Use your concordance.

Why couldn't they rest where they were?  
 What misconception do many people have regarding Christianity?  
 What are some of the practical benefits of mental and physical relaxation?  
 What principle guided Jesus in his attitude toward this question?  
 Why are so many people a "bundle of quivering nerves"?  
 Show that periods of rest are necessary in order to have a better life.  
 Why do physically exhausted people so often suffer a mental collapse?  
 How only, then, may normal people lead a strenuous life?  
 Why do so many people ignore these basic principles?

**Rest Is Likewise Essential**

Under what circumstances did this section of our lesson take place?  
 Why did Jesus want the disciples to rest?

**Lesson VI—November 5, 1961**

**RESPECT FOR CIVIL AUTHORITY**

**Lesson Text**

**Mark 12: 13-17; Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Pet. 2: 13-16**

13 And they send unto him certain of the Phar-i-sees and of the He-ro'-di-ans, that they might catch him in talk.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cae'-sar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hy-pocrisy, said unto them, Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius, that I may see it.

16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cae'-sar's.

17 And Je'-sus said unto them, Render unto Cae'-sar the things that are Cae'-sar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at him.

1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.

3 For rulers are not a terror to

the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:

4 For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

6 For for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

13 Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme;

14 Or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well.

15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16 As free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 32: 1-8.

**Daily Bible Readings**

October 30. M. Our Obligation to Government (Rom. 13: 1-10)  
 October 31. T.....God and Caesar (Mark 12: 13-17)

November 1. W.....	Christians and the Law (1 Pet. 3: 13-17)
November 2. T.....	Debt to God and Country (Mark 12: 13-17)
November 3. F.....	Jesus' Regard for Law (Matt. 5: 13-20)
November 4. S.....	Abuse of Privilege (Mark 12: 1-12)
November 5. S.....	Mob Spirit Opposed to Law (Acts 19: 30-41)

TIME.—Mark, A.D. 30; Romans, A.D. 58; First Peter, A.D. 63.

PLACES.—Mark, Jerusalem; Romans, Corinth; First Peter, Babylon.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Pharisees, Herodians; Paul, Peter, and those to whom they wrote.

### Introduction

Our lesson for today is one of the neglected subjects, generally speaking, among the Lord's people. Too many professed followers of Christ are satisfied to follow their own thinking with regard to such matters, rather than to make a sincere effort to determine just what the Bible has to say on the subject. Or, to state the same thing in other words, there are too many people, claiming to follow the Lord, who use their own reason as to what they should do with reference to civil governments, rather than to seek diligently for some scriptural evidence as to what the will of the Lord is.

One of the first things to keep in mind is that true Christianity is always a *unit*, whereas, civil governments may be as different from each other, almost, as daylight is from darkness. Compare a "republic" with a "totalitarian state." And since the Lord's commission to his disciples (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16) contemplates Christians in all parts of the world, it follows that the people of the Lord must maintain a relationship with all forms of civil governments, both the good and the bad, so far as human judgment is concerned; for Christians have no God-

given right to choose to obey only those which they prefer, or which they believe to be constitutional and best: they must be subject to the government under which they live, regardless of its character.

Any one who is willing to read the Bible will soon see that there is an abundance of teaching on the subject of Christians and civil governments. Jesus, for example, 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.) And with these words of the Lord in mind, listen to the inspired Peter and Paul: "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2: 11, 12.) "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3: 20.) The Lord's people are in the world, but they are not of the world. (See John 17: 14-16.)

### The Golden Text

*"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."* A nation which is exalted is raised in the estimation of God and right-thinking people; and the way to do that is for the people of the nation, and especially its rulers, to practice that which is just and right. Sin, on the other hand, will have a degrading effect on any people. "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked." (Prov. 11: 11.) There

is no indication here that the reference to the exaltation of the nation is such as to result in the eternal salvation of the people in question, but rather to their moral position as it respects the nations of the earth. God never frowns upon any people who do right, even in this world and with reference to worldly affairs.

The annals of history furnish no example of any nation being righteous before God in the sense that it was wholly acceptable to him. But

inasmuch as Christians are recognized by "the powers that be" as citizens, and since they are to have a leavening influence on society in general, it seems that the Lord's people should do everything within their power to make the governments recognize and obey the will of God. But even while doing this, they must always keep the fact in mind that they are, above all things else, subjects of Christ their King.

The kingdom of Christ is founded on love, whereas, the kingdoms and governments of men are based on force. These are facts which are sufficient to reveal a difference which

should easily show Christians where their duty lies. If the argument is made that the wicked will carry things their way, if the good people do not take a hand in the affairs of human government, it should be remembered that such wicked people can and often do use methods and means in order to get their way which are totally different from the way of Christ. Christian people, of course, cannot compete with sinful people in those respects, and cannot therefore hope to overcome or outmaneuver them by means of joint participation in the affairs of state. (Cf. Rom. 12: 21.)

## The Text Explained

### Both God and Caesar Must be Respected

(Mark 12: 13-17)

And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk. It is amazing that people who proceed as these people did with reference to Jesus cannot see the sinfulness of their way; but they apparently cannot. And what was true of them is also true of people today who are characterized by the same spirit. The people who were opposed to Jesus were wholly unable to find anything wrong with his teaching, and so they endeavored to get him to say something which they could use against him; and it is easy to see from their subsequent action that they were not concerned about correctly representing him. (Cf. Matt. 26: 59.) McGarvey observes that the task of a detective who seeks to entangle a bad man in his talk for the purpose of exposing him is not an enviable one; but to lay such snares for a good man is truly diabolical. That, as the text declares, is exactly what the Pharisees and the Herodians were attempting to do. It is regrettable that that spirit did not die with the people of that day, but any careful observer knows that it did not.

And when they were come, they say unto him, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? Shall we

give or shall we not give? It is possible for one to speak the truth in a hypocritical manner, and that is what these men did. Some one has said that the devil himself never lies so foully, as when he speaks the truth. These emissaries evidently thought that they had a plan, that is, a trap, from which their victim could not extricate himself.

The plan of the men who were sent to entrap Jesus was to ask him a question, as if to settle a dispute which had arisen between the Pharisees and the Herodians regarding the paying of taxes to the Roman government. This was evidently the reason why two opposing groups united their efforts to ensnare Jesus. They had no love for each other, but if they together could destroy Jesus, they were willing to forget their differences. If the Lord's answer should be in the negative, then the Herodians who supported the government would report the matter to the governor. (Cf. Luke 23: 2.) But if the answer should be in the affirmative, then that would give the Pharisees an excuse to tell the people that Jesus was compromising with the Romans, and that he could not therefore be the promised Messiah or Deliverer; and that would be all that they needed for a pretext to stir up the multitudes against him. (Cf. Deut. 17: 14, 15.)

Inasmuch as Julius Caesar was the first Caesar to become Emperor of Rome, those who followed him in that office were also called "Caesar," just as the rulers of Egypt were called "Pharaoh." The tribute which the

Romans exacted from the Jews, along with other subjugated peoples, was exceedingly galling to Jewish pride; and many Jewish leaders had grave doubts about it being allowed by the law of Moses. Josephus tells of Judas of Galilee raising a revolt on this account, and saying that taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery. (Cf. Acts 5: 37; Luke 2: 1ff.)

*But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.* If these men had not been so calloused, they would have been greatly ashamed when Jesus revealed to them that he well understood their hypocrisy, but their aim was to destroy him and they lost sight of everything else. But instead of being entangled himself, Jesus placed the principal actors in the conspiracy in a position where they could have a part in setting forth the truth regarding the question which they had propounded. The "denarius" (an anglicized Greek word) was a Roman silver coin which normally was worth about seventeen or eighteen cents, and was the amount which was paid for a day's work to an average laborer. (See Matt. 20: 2; cf. 18: 28.)

*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.* This statement gives the true significance of our twofold relationship—to God and the powers that be. Each has a claim on us, and we cannot be what we should without discharging both of them. There would have been no cause for astonishment on the part of the enemies of Jesus, if they had been trying to do right themselves.

### God and the Powers That Be

(Rom. 13: 1-7)

*Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.* It is doubtful if there is another statement, even

in the Bible itself, which gives a plainer view of the relationship which Christians sustain to civil governments, as well as the manner in which they came to be. God ordained them, and he specifically commands that his people be subject to them. The term "subjection" should be carefully noted. The Lord tells his people to be subject to, not a participant in, the governments under which they live.

No one can read the New Testament for what it says without being impressed with the fact that the spirit and practice of civil governments are foreign to the spirit and practice which Christ requires of his people. "But 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: . . ." (See Matt. 20: 25-28.) This raises the question: Do Christians have the right, in the light of the teaching of the New Testament, to participate in the affairs of human governments, to the extent of voting and holding administrative offices? This seems to be a fair question, and regardless of which side of the question any Christian takes, he should endeavor to deal fairly with the word of God, that is, he should commit himself only after listening to the unimpeachable testimony of the inspired Scriptures themselves.

It must be admitted by all fair-minded people who are familiar with the teaching of the Bible on the subject now under consideration that the New Testament itself nowhere mentions or even suggests, that the Lord's people engage in such practices as voting or holding administrative offices in civil governments with the Lord's approval. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) On the other hand, there is not a duty which the Lord requires a Christian to discharge toward the government under which he lives that cannot be fulfilled without exercising the franchise of the ballot. Compare an English citizen who lives in America. He has duties and responsibilities which he must discharge and fulfill; but he is not allowed to vote in any election.

Furthermore, God's attitude toward human governments may also

be seen by considering such passages as Dan. 4: 17; Jer. 27: 5-11; 51: 20-24. (Cf. Psalm 76: 10; Isa. 44: 28; 45: 1, 5-7.) Human governments therefore, without knowing that they are serving him, are used by God in accomplishing his purposes here upon the earth; and since God raises up and casts down governments and rulers, it is conceivable that Christians might find themselves striving against God by voting and seeking to hold administrative offices in such governments. (By *administrative offices* it is meant those offices which are expected to be used as means of shaping and directing the government into certain channels, for the accomplishment of certain definite ends. Such officials are sometimes called *policy makers*, that is, those who are responsible for what the government is and shall be.) Those who vote might try to place in office those whom God rejects, and endeavor to reject those whom God desires to use for the accomplishment of his long-range purpose. (Cf. Jer. 25: 8, 9; 27: 1-11.)

*For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, and avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.* Not only does God use human governments to work his will with reference to other civil governments, but also as a means of punishing sinful individuals. The passage just quoted is one of the clearest statements on record regarding capital punishment. But it should always be kept in mind that such punishment is a function of the state and not of the individual or the church. It is true that such responsibility is often abused, and innocent people are sometimes put to death; but that does not detract from the fact that the passage now before us authorizes the act. The civil ruler therefore is a minister of God, but his work is in a different field from that of the church; and unless that fact is kept clearly in mind, the passage now before us cannot be properly understood.

Under the law of Moses God made it very plain that both the civil and the religious aspects of his law were to be administered by his people as a theocracy; "church" and "state" were *united* during that age. The administration of the entire law, both civil and religious, was in the hands of his people, that is, those who were in covenant relationship with him. But when we come to the kingdom of Christ and the law by which his people of this dispensation are governed, we find the basic principles of his moral law with reference to human governments incorporated in this new law; but we find an entirely different application of these principles, insofar as their administration is concerned. Instead of the civil laws being administered by the people who are in covenant relationship with the Lord, either individually or as a whole, we find that that responsibility is in the hands of those who are not in covenant relationship with him.

There is not a single reference in the New Testament which clearly states, or implies, that a single child of God in Christ was ever charged, by divine authority, with the administration of the affairs of civil governments. Such matters, in New Testament times, were always found in the hands of those who were not in covenant relationship with the Lord. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6.) Christians are taught to obey, rather than to *rule*. The work of both the church and the state is the work of God, but the members of each group have a different sphere in which to function. God has something for the civil governments to do and he has something for the church to do; and the obligation of any individual therefore depends upon *where* he is. (Cf. the State [diplomatic] and Defense [force] Departments of the United States Government.) There is nothing inconsistent in the government's having both departments, with their different manner and means of carrying out the government's wishes; and neither is there anything inconsistent in God's working through both the church and human governments, which are entirely different institutions (cf. John 18: 36; 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12), for the accomplishment of his purposes.

*Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.* Fear alone is not a sufficient motive for being in subjection to the powers that be: the Christian's conscience must also be vitally affected. He must obey because God says so, and that is what his conscience will urge him to do.

### The Duty and Motive of the Christian

(1 Pet. 2: 13-16)

*Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well.* Christians are expected to live exemplary lives under whatever form of government they may chance to live; but if and when any human government calls upon them to do something which is contrary to God's law for his people, they must respectfully decline to obey the earthly rulers in that respect, and must always, of course, be willing to suffer whatever punishment the governmental authorities

may see fit to inflict upon them. (See Acts 4: 18-20; 5: 27-29; cf. Dan. 3: 1-30; 6: 1-28.)

Peter's statement here is in complete harmony with that which Paul taught in the preceding section of our lesson. Paul also said, "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2.) Both Peter and Paul are setting forth the attitude which Christians should manifest toward civil rulers. No one can pray earnestly for another, and at the same time manifest a wrong attitude toward him. It is the Christian's duty to love, and if there is to be any vengeance wrought, he must leave that in the hands of God. (See Rom. 12: 18-21.) Both Paul and Peter tell us that God uses civil rulers to execute vengeance. They not only execute vengeance, they also praise them who do well.

*For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bond-servants of God.* Regardless of that which the government may do or not do, the best possible thing that the Christian can do is to set a good example of godly living in all things.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

### Introduction

Why is the subject for today such a neglected one?

How would you suggest that this situation be remedied?

What is the basic difference between Christianity and civil governments?

Why is there a universal need for a study like this?

Discuss some of the prominent Bible statements regarding the Christian and civil governments.

### The Golden Text

In what sense does righteousness exalt a nation?

How alone may the people of any nation be saved in heaven?

Where does the principal duty of the Christian lie? Give reasons for your answer.

Both God and Caesar Must Be Respected

Discuss the spirit which prompted the

enemies of Jesus to make this trial of him.

How is it possible for one to speak the truth in a hypocritical manner?

Discuss the plan by which the enemies of Jesus sought to ensnare him.

What two groups united in this effort? and why?

What was the basic difference between the Pharisees and the Herodians?

Who was "Caesar" and why the tribute to him?

Why did the Jews object to paying the tribute?

How did Jesus respond to the question his enemies asked him?

How were they affected by his answer? What responsibility do Christians owe to God and civil governments?

### God and the Powers That Be

For what purpose did God ordain the powers that be?

What does Paul say the Christian's relation to them is?

What difference is noted in the New-Testament between the spirit and practice of civil governments and that which

Christ requires of his people?  
 To what extent may Christians participate in human governments with God's approval?  
 What bearing does 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17 have on this question?  
 What is God's attitude toward human governments? or what is in his purpose concerning them?  
 In what sense is a civil ruler, a "minister" of God?  
 What does the New Testament teach regarding "capital punishment"?  
 What basic difference is there between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ regarding God's people and human governments?

Where does the New Testament teach, or imply, that Christians are charged with the administration of civil governments?  
 What determines the obligation of Christians with references to them?  
 What is the principal motive which should prompt the Christian's attitude toward human governments?

**The Duty and Motive of the Christian**  
 Why are Christians to be subject to every ordinance of man?  
 Show the harmony between Paul and Peter with reference to the subject now before us.  
 Discuss the power of a good example of godly living.

**Lesson VII—November 12, 1961**

**THE WAY TO WORLD PEACE**

**Lesson Text**

**Isa. 2: 2-4; Acts 17: 22-28; John 4: 20, 21**

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

3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Je-h6'-vah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zi'on shall go forth the law, and the word of Je-h6'-vah from Je-ru'-sa-lem.

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

22 And Paul stood in the midst of the Ar-e-6p'-a-gus, and said,

Ye men of Ath'-ens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious.

23 For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.

24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For he is our peace, who made both one."* (Eph. 2: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 98: 1-9.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- November 6. M..... Christ's Peaceful Reign (Isa. 11: 1-9)
- November 7. T..... Kingdom to Be Established (Isa. 2: 1-4)
- November 8. W..... God of All Nations (Acts 17: 22-31)

November 9. T.....	Peaceful Co-existence (Isa. 19: 18-25)
November 10. F.....	Kinship of Nations (Psalm 87)
November 11. S.....	All Nations Included (Mark 16: 15, 16; Matt. 28: 18-20)
November 12. S.....	Gospel in the Tongues of All (Acts 2: 1-6)

TIME.—Isaiah, 760 B.C.; Acts, A.D. 50-52; John, A.D. 27.

PLACES.—Isaiah, Jerusalem; Acts, Athens; John, Sychar.

PERSONS.—Isaiah, the Jews, Paul, the Athenians, Jesus and the woman of Samaria.

### Introduction

Thousands of people who are studying these lessons have seen something of the horrors of two world wars, and have, according to our statesmen, been on the "brink" of another one more than once. These terrible conditions should make everyone, to say nothing of our respect for God and his word, do everything possible to focus the attention of responsible people on the subject of peace. A just and lasting peace should engage the efforts of people everywhere, and Christians in particular. But anyone who knows anything about the Bible is aware of the fact that God must be taken into consideration before a condition like that can prevail.

War has been described as the most colossal and ruinous social evil which afflicts mankind today. The human mind is incapable of grasping the far-flung consequences of this destructive procedure. For example, the World War of 1914-1918 resulted in a direct cost of \$186,000,000,000; an indirect cost from destruction, etc., of \$84,000,000,000; a cost in the capitalized value of human life, \$67,000,000,000; or a total money cost of \$337,000,000,000. The total military cost of World War II to all belligerents has been placed at \$1,116,991,463,084, and property damage at

\$230,900,000,000. These figures do not include the cost and damage of the eight-year war in China and the one in Korea. But these huge sums of money fade into insignificance when we consider the moral loss and spiritual bankruptcy of the nations directly and indirectly involved. Soldiers were hardened and brutalized; civilians were embittered and demoralized; homes were broken up and filled with suffering; while mankind in general lay wounded, degraded, and destroyed.

Carnal warfare has never been able to achieve any good and lasting purpose whatsoever. The great conflicts of World Wars I and II demonstrate the indiscriminate ruin into which war plunges the victor, vanquished, and neutrals alike. What did any nation gain as a result of these wars? No war ever improved the social and moral condition of any country, or solved a single problem which confronted it. War as we now know it cannot possibly achieve any good end, but can only accentuate every evil it seeks to correct. These are terrible facts to consider, and especially in the light of the growing possibility of a third global and nuclear war. May God help us all to see the great need of working for peace in this troubled world!

### The Golden Text

"For he is our peace, who made both one." The reference here, of course, is to the peace which Christ made between Jew and Gentile, but it is the only peace which will insure tranquility in the world in which we live. Or, to say the same thing in other words, "in Christ" is the only place where lasting peace can be found. Nations by their diplomacy can forestall a conflict for a time; but it will take more than national diplomacy to prevent it altogether.

Jesus is called the "Prince of

Peace" in the Book of Isaiah. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9: 6.) This prediction was made some seven hundred and fifty years before the angel spoke unto the shepherds and said, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the

city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." (Luke 2: 10-14.)

There is a vast difference in saying, "And on earth peace, good-will toward men," as the King James Version has it, and "on earth peace among men in whom he is well

pleased," as found in the American Standard Version. Anyone who is familiar with the Bible knows that God has never promised peace to those who disregard his will. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. 57: 21.) The peace of Christ is only to those who do his will, and it includes every kind of peace which man can know, such as peace of conscience, peace with his fellow men, the ease of mind regarding worldly matters, as may be seen by considering what the New Testament says about it.

### The Text Explained

#### The Basis for World Peace

(Isa. 2: 2-4)

*And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.* When all the facts are taken into consideration, it will be seen that the passage now before us is foreshadowing the coming of the kingdom of Christ. The "latter days" could mean, either the last days of the Jewish dispensation, or the age of Christ; but since the reference is specifically to the time of the church's establishment, it appears almost certain that Isaiah had reference to the Christian dispensation. (Cf. Acts 2: 17.)

The term "mountain" is frequently used in the Bible in a figurative sense to indicate strength and stability; and when it is applied to a government or kingdom, as it evidently is here, the idea is that the government or kingdom will be exceedingly strong. We know that this is true of the kingdom of Christ, as may be seen by reading such passages as Dan. 2: 44; Matt. 16: 18; Heb. 12: 28. The "church" and "kingdom," when referring to the one over which Christ reigns, refer to one and the same thing. The church emphasized the called out feature, while the kingdom is the governmental aspect, that is, it stresses that idea.

If the text now before us is read in the light of Dan. 2, it will be seen that the probable idea is that the kingdom of Christ will tower higher than all the kingdoms of the earth, and that it will be stronger and more enduring than any or all of them.

We know that this is true from the passages cited in the previous paragraph. The expression "and all nations shall flow unto it" has reference to the world-wide aspect of the great commission. The kingdom of Christ is not for just one people, but for all nations. (Cf. Mark 16: 15; Acts 15: 13b-18.) This is, of course, essential for world peace. The "brotherhood of men" must become a reality, if the nations of the earth are to live together in peace.

And many peoples shall go and say, *Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.* If Isaiah's prediction is compared with that of Micah (4: 1-3)—both prophets were speaking of the same events—it will be seen that the kingdom of Christ would be in marked contrast with the desolate picture which Micah drew of the kingdom of Judah. "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." (Mic. 3: 12.) These words were spoken just before the prophecy concerning the kingdom of Christ.

No one can do the will of the Lord until he learns it; and it is for that reason that those who are desirous of entering the kingdom are expected to be taught of his ways. (Cf. Matt. 28: 18-20; Acts 2: 42.) It is only by complete subjection to God's will by all the people who profess to follow him that peace can result. It

matters not how much enmity may have existed between and among the people before they entered the kingdom, peace will certainly follow when the will of the Lord is learned and obeyed. The most symbolic picture of this on record was drawn by Isaiah:

"And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11: 6-9.)

It would be a fine thing if professed followers of Christ would consider present-day conditions in the church in the light of Isaiah's prediction, and then make sure that they themselves are not responsible for the lack of peace and harmony which exists almost everywhere. Peace must begin in the kingdom of Christ, if it is to be enjoyed in a wider circle.

*And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.* As people submit themselves to the will of Christ, his word will become the basis of judgment between them; and as they yield themselves to him, they shall turn their instruments of war into instruments of peace. Hastings has pointed out that Christianity has introduced mankind to a new kind of courage; the courage which is shown, not in resisting or gaining the victory over enemies, but in a love which refuses to count any man an enemy, and that sought to conquer by patient endurance of every wrong, and even of death itself. With this new spirit in the Christian, the highest honor possible to him was not the prize of victory in battle, but the crown of

martyrdom. This type of fortitude was for a time so exclusively honored, that by many Christians the life of a soldier, even of one who fought for the best of causes, was regarded as profane and unholy. "How," asks Tertullian, "shall Christians go to war whom Christ has disarmed? In taking the sword from St. Peter, Christ has disarmed all soldiers."

### God's Purpose for Man

(Acts 17: 22-28)

*And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.* If this section of the text is, along with the rest of the lesson, to point the way to world peace, then we must see in it that which Paul says about God's plan regarding the human race. It was never his intention that people should live apart from him, and fight and devour each other. (Cf. James 4: 1-4.)

The specific part which this section of the text has in the overall plan of God for his people is seen in Paul's effort to lead the Athenians to the heavenly Father through Christ. But since the apostle was speaking to auditors who were totally ignorant of the Scripture, it was necessary for him to seek another and different approach to their hearts. He did this by beginning with their own moral and spiritual condition, something which they both understood and appreciated. After his encounter with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in the marketplace, Paul was brought into the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, the seat of the "ancient and venerable Athenian court which decided the most solemn questions connected with religion." It was here that Socrates was tried and condemned on the charge of innovating on the state religion. It received its name from the legend of the trial of Mars for the murder of the son of Neptune. (See Vincent, *in loco.*)

In saying that the Athenians were "very religious," Paul was actually complimenting them. He did not, of course, approve of their religion, but

he did tell them that they were "more divinity-fearing than the rest of the Greeks"; or, as Ramsay renders it, you are "more than others respectful of what is divine." McGarvey translates the expression, "Very demon-fearing," which, of course, was their conception of divinity, since they regarded demons as objects of worship. Their idea of demons was very different from ours or that of the Jews. Their desire to reverence higher beings was good, in and of itself, but it was misdirected; and it was Paul's purpose, not to condemn the noble trait, but to guide the sentiment aright by revealing to them the true God whom they were worshiping in ignorance.

*The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.* In these verses and the ones to follow in this section of our lesson, Paul's purpose was to reveal something of the nature of the true God to the people to whom he spoke. Referring again to the altar with the inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD, the apostle was in effect, as Hackett observes, saying to them, "You are correct in acknowledging a divine existence beyond any which the ordinary rites of your worship recognize; there is such an existence. You are correct in confessing that this Being is unknown to you; you have no just conceptions of his nature and perfections." If they can be made to see something of the nature and perfection of this God, and then can be induced to live for him, the world itself would be different.

*And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.* The poet whom Paul quoted was Aratus of Cilicia, who lived some three centuries before Paul's day, and the quotation was

from his opening invocation to Zeus. The apostle's whole aim was to show the unity of the human race, under God, and that as such they were made to seek God; and if all men do that, they cannot be at variance with each other. The various sections of the human race, as indicated by their "seasons" and "habitation," are not the subjects of different gods, but of one loving heavenly Father.

### A Universal Appeal

(John 4: 20, 21)

*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.* The point in this section of our lesson is the controversy among men regarding the worship which belongs to Jehovah; and anyone who is acquainted with the facts in the case is aware of the many conflicts which have resulted from these misunderstandings. When men seek God, as he has ordained that they should, and then worship and serve him according to his revealed will, there will be no occasions for strife and fightings, such as characterize the world today. This is the only way to certain peace among men. This fact was demonstrated by the early church.

In his address before the League of Nations in Geneva, Harry Emerson Fosdick said that during the first two or three centuries after Christ all Christians steadfastly refused to bear arms, according to the testimony of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and others. The early church has been called the first peace society. Then came Christianity's growing power—the days when Christians, no longer outcasts, were stronger than their adversaries, until at last the imperial household of Constantine himself accepted Christianity. Then the church, joined with the state, forgot its earlier attitudes, bowed to the necessity of imperial action, became sponsor for war, blesser of war, cause of war, and finally, fighter of war. Since then the church has come down through history all too often trying

to carry the cross of Jesus in one hand and a dripping sword in the other, until now when Christians look out upon the consequences of it all, this abysmal disgrace of professed Christianity making mockery of the

gospel, the conviction rises that we had better go back to our first traditions, our early purity, and see whether those first disciples of the Lord were not nearer right than we have been.

**Questions for Discussion**

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, places, and persons.

In what sense will the Lord judge between the nations?  
What will those who turn to the Lord do?  
What new kind of courage has Christianity introduced?  
How should war be regarded by the Lord's people?

**Introduction**

Give some reasons for the importance of this study regarding peace.  
What are some of the appalling horrors of carnal warfare?  
What has been the greatest failure of war? Show something of its effect on victors, vanquished, and neutrals alike.

**God's Purpose for Man**

Under what circumstances did Paul deliver his address in Athens?  
What is its relationship to our lesson today?  
Discuss the approach which Paul made on the occasion now before us.  
What did he mean by saying that they were "very religious"?  
Why didn't Paul condemn their religion outright?

**The Golden Text**

Give the setting of this text and show its relation to the lesson now before us.  
Who alone is able to prevent war? Give reasons for your answer.  
In what sense is Jesus the "Prince of Peace"?  
What testimony did the angel who announced his birth give concerning him?  
To whom has peace been promised?

Do you think Paul's plan would work today? Give reasons for your answer.  
How did the apostle go about revealing to them something of the nature and perfection of God?

**The Basis for World Peace**

What is the mountain of Jehovah's house? Give reasons for your answer.  
When and where was it established?  
Show the relationship between the "kingdom" and the "church."  
How is the kingdom of Christ compared to other kingdoms?  
What promise was made regarding the kingdom or church of Christ?  
What is the relation of the church to the question of world peace?  
Why is teaching so essential to this great end?  
Why, then, are so many people neglecting this great responsibility?  
Discuss Isaiah's symbolic picture of peace.  
What effect should this have on every member of the church, in view of present-day conditions?

What use did Paul make of the inscription, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD"?  
What did he say regarding the creation and arrangements of the nations of the earth?  
What bearing did that have on the question of idolatry vs. Jehovah?  
What effect will the acceptance of this teaching have on world peace?

**A Universal Appeal**

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this section?  
What bearing do they have on the question of world peace?  
How did the early church demonstrate their attitude toward peace?  
Tell something of the manner in which the "church" came to accept the idea of carnal warfare.  
What should faithful Christians today do about the question now before us?

**Lesson VIII—November 19, 1961**

**EVANGELIZING THE WORLD**

**Lesson Text**

**Isa. 11: 1-10; Acts 1: 6-9**

1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Je-se, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of Je-ho'-vah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Je-ho'-vah.

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Je-ho'-vah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nei-

ther decide after the hearing of his ears;

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

6 And the wolf shall dwell with

the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Je-ho'-vah, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jes'-se, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples,

unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Is'-ra-el?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority.

8 But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Je-ru'-sa-lem, and in all Ju'-dae'a and Sa-ma'-ri-a, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 65: 17-25.

### Daily Bible Readings

November 13. M.....	The Gospel to All (Acts 2: 1-47)
November 14. T.....	All Invited (Matt. 11: 20-28)
November 15. W.....	Grace Manifested to All (Titus 2: 11, 12)
November 16. Th.....	World Lost (1 John 2: 15-25)
November 17. F.....	Salvation in Christ (Gal. 3: 23-29)
November 18. S.....	Saved Through the Gospel (1 Cor. 1: 21-15; 15: 1-3)
November 19. S.....	Gospel Must Be Obeyed (2 Thess. 1: 1-9)

TIME.—Isaiah, 713 B.C.; Acts, A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Isaiah, Jerusalem; Acts, mount Olivet.

PERSONS.—Isaiah, the people of Israel; Jesus, and his disciples.

### Introduction

To evangelize the world simply means to preach the gospel to the whole creation. That is what the prophets of the Old Testament, including Isaiah, predicted would be done, and that is what the disciples of Jesus actually accomplished. The missionary spirit of the early church was responsible for preaching the gospel to the Roman empire within a single generation. Some thirty years after the church was established, Paul wrote these words to the Colossians: "If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister." (Col. 1: 23.)

It is regrettable that this spirit of evangelism is not so manifest in the church today, as it was in the days

of the apostles; but anyone who has any conception of the world and its needs knows that there is no adequate substitute for it. The truth of the gospel must reach the hearts of the people, if they are to be made better. The gospel today is the same as it was when it was first proclaimed (cf. Gal. 1: 6-9), and the needs of the peoples of the earth are also basically the same. It is true that we are living under different situations, and that fact must be taken into consideration by the successful evangelist; but when all is said and done, people are still in need of salvation from sin.

That which Robert E. Speer once said about "foreign missions" is equally true of any mission work, namely, argument in behalf of mission work is generally either needless or useless. It is needless with

those who understand and genuinely believe the teaching of the New Testament; and it is useless with those who do not. And then Dr. Speer added, "And yet not wholly so; for often believers and unbelievers alike have taken their opinions at second-hand, and an honest firsthand study

of the facts and principles of the missionary enterprise leads the one group to believe with deeper conviction and a firmer hope, and shakes the scepticism and opposition of the others who have known neither the aims nor the motives which inspire the movement."

### The Golden Text

*"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation."* These are among the last words of Jesus to his apostles, and they were spoken just a little while before he left them to ascend to his Father in heaven. It made a great deal of difference with those men, whether they should simply be possessors and holders of the truth which had been vouchsafed to them, or whether they should share it with others and take it to the ends of the earth. The apostle Paul, years later, expressed the general feeling about the matter in these words, "So that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"; and added that he had no other place in that region to preach it. (See Rom. 15: 19-23.) They simply went everywhere preaching the word.

The final commission which Christ gave to his disciples put the stamp of universality on the Christian religion. In the words of another, Christianity is "a religion, not merely universal in the sense that it should be freely open to all who came to seek for it, but universal in the sense that it should go out and seek

for men in their own homes; a religion of conquest and progress in all directions; a religion which should be satisfied with nothing short of having won over 'the whole creation,' the tribes of men of every language and color, from north to south, on whom the sun rises and on whom it sets, to the obedience of Christ, and to the kingdom of his Father."

The commission which Christ gave to his people, as recorded by Mark, is often too superficially read by his followers today. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" does not merely mean to travel over the surface of the earth and speak to men. That, of course, must be done; but we must not think that we have discharged our full obligation by simply speaking the word. Our lives must be behind the message, and every effort, including sacrifices, must be made in order to get men to yield themselves to the message; for it is in proportion to the manner in which people respond to the message which they have heard, that they are blessed by it. There is more to gospel preaching than the mere uttering of words.

### The Text Explained

#### Redemption from Great Destruction

(Isa. 11: 1-5)

*And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.* In the preceding chapter, Isaiah pictured the destruction of Israel by the Assyrians under the figure of the destruction of a great forest. "Therefore will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory there shall be kindled a burning like the burning of fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and his

briers in one day. And he will consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and it shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth. And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few, so that a child may write them." (Isa. 10: 16-19.)

This destruction of Israel was in punishment for their sins, and it was directed by Jehovah himself. Assyria was his agent, although that great nation did not realize it. "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation! I will send him against a profane nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge,

to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut nations not a few." (Verses 5-7.) This is another illustration of the manner in which Jehovah rules in the kingdoms of men (cf. Dan. 4: 17) and makes the wrath of man to serve him (Psalm 76: 10; cf. Ex. 9: 13-16).

But God did not intend for the punishment which was inflicted by the Assyrians to be permanent and complete, and therein lies the significance of this section of our lesson text for today. Instead of the stock of the tree of Jesse continuing to decay until it returned to the dust of the earth, a tender branch came out of it, and in due time it bore fruit. That, of course, is a reference to the coming of Christ from the family of David. Paul refers to this very thing in Rom. 15: 12, "And again Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles." (Cf. Isa. 11: 10.) Thus, not only do we learn from Paul whom the branch or twig foreshadowed, but we also are told that his rule will be extended to include the Gentiles.

*And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.* This is an expression of the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the ministry of Christ; and there are seven things or gifts specified, namely, (1) rest upon him, that is, be with him permanently; (2) wisdom; (3) understanding; (4) counsel; (5) might; (6) knowledge; and (7) the fear of Jehovah. This means that the Messiah would be completely fitted for the work which was ordained for him. (Cf. Acts 10: 38.)

In looking at this prophetic picture of the Messiah, we see him as the very ideal of a strong and righteous ruler of men. This ideal was completely fulfilled in Jesus, who was and is the promised Messiah, and in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (See Col. 2: 3.) This, of course, implies that he would never experience any dif-

ficulty in his administration, or be brought under the shadow of any perplexity. This portrait of the Messiah also presents a picture of the graces which are in store for the needs of all the people who are willing to accept his offer of salvation and Christian guidance. (Cf. 1 Cor. 4: 7; James 1: 5-8.) The New Testament emphasizes the fact that the special work of the Spirit during the reign of Christ is to bring to fulfillment in human experience the whole meaning of Jesus Christ as God's Son and the Redeemer of the world.

*And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.* These verses describe the spirit and character of the rule of Christ. The Father, says Jesus, has given all authority and judgment into the hands of the Son (see Matt. 28: 18; John 5: 22, 27), and his reign is always according to the principles of justice and righteousness. These things must be kept in mind when we come to apply this section of our lesson to the overall principle of evangelism.

### The Glorious Reign of the Prince of Peace

(Isa. 11: 6-10)

*And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the failing together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.*

This gem of scripture should be kept together in the minds of those who study this lesson; for it is truly

one of the great statements regarding the Messiah's reign. Bible students are not agreed as to the sense in which we are to understand the animals in question—whether they are to be taken literally, as a return to the scenes of Eden before sin entered the world; or whether they are to be compared to men of fierce and furious dispositions, who bite and devour according to their sinful desires before having their tempers altered by the power of the gospel of Christ. The context seems to suggest the latter view, and that is the position taken here.

If the viewpoint just suggested is correct, then we have before us one of the great motives for evangelizing the world. One does not have to look very far or very long in this sinful world before he is fully aware that Burns was right when he said, "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." But when the gospel of Christ has been brought to bear upon those in sin, it will not be long until they can live in peace with the humblest saint here upon the earth. No greater illustration of this principle at work need be sought than that of the one-time notorious Saul of Tarsus. (Cf. Acts 26: 9-11; 1 Thess. 2: 7f.) It is, of course, only through the "knowledge of Jehovah" that such a happy situation can be brought about; and that requires the proclamation of the word of the Lord throughout the world. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [church]; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious.* The coming Messiah was represented, not as a stately and luxuriant tree, but as coming from the apparently dead roots of a decayed tree. (Cf. Isa. 53: 2; Rom. 15: 12; Rev. 5: 5; 22: 16.) This promised Redeemer is portrayed by Isaiah as "an ensign of the people," that is, a standard toward which they might look and around which they might gather. This was literally fulfilled when Christ was raised on the cross. "And

I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But thus he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die." (John 12: 32, 33.) The "resting-place," in its practical application to us, is the church. (Cf. Isa. 60: 13; Eph. 5: 25-27; the resting-place of the ark in the sanctuary of the temple under the first covenant.)

### The Gospel Sent Forth

(Acts 1: 6-9)

*They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* We learn from the previous paragraph of Acts 1 that Jesus appeared to the disciples by the space of forty days, following his resurrection from the dead, and that he spoke to them the things concerning the kingdom of God. The question which the disciples asked at this time contains several suggestions which should not be overlooked. (1) Their established faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah—the Coming One who would reign over Israel. (Cf. Isa. 9: 6, 7.) (2) Their mistaken idea regarding the nature of the kingdom over which he would reign. Notwithstanding the teaching which they had received from Jesus during the time they were with him, they apparently still clung to the idea that the kingdom would be to some extent, at least, a temporal one, and that it would make possible their former prosperity and power, free from such domination by foreign powers as they were then undergoing from the Romans. (3) The kingdom had not yet been established. In spite of their misconception of the nature of the kingdom, they did not fall into the error of thinking that the kingdom had already been established, as many people today have done.

*And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority.* The Lord told his inquiring disciples that it was not their privilege to search curiously into a matter which God had reserved to himself. The times and seasons were the broad areas and the specific periods of history as it applies to men. It was to be the lot of the disciples, as Olshausen expresses

the matter, to be witnesses of that which actually happened, rather than to be prophets of that which was coming. This is an important lesson for all of us to learn today. God has revealed that which he wants us to know, and there is no excuse for our trying to speculate regarding the future.

*But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* Bible students who consider Luke and Acts together as the two-volume historical record which Luke wrote will recall this statement in the last chapter of Luke, in relation to the passage now before us: "Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24: 48, 49.)

In the passage now under consideration, Jesus told the disciples exactly when they would receive the promised power—"when the Holy Spirit is come upon you"; and when we read Acts 2: 1-4 we can see when they received the power: "And when

the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." It is also interesting to note that the kingdom was also to come with power. (Cf. Mark 9: 1.)

The "witnessing for Jesus," or, which is the same thing, preaching the gospel, was to be done in an orderly fashion. Its beginning was where the basic events took place, and then step by step they were to go from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the world. (See map, and compare the record in Acts.)

*And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.* It is interesting to note that of the four gospel writers, only the two non-apostles mention this great event. (See Mark 16: 19, 20; Luke 24: 50-53; Acts 1: 9-11.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

#### Introduction

What does the term "evangelize" mean?

How are the two testaments tied together in this respect?

What can you say of the missionary spirit of the early church?

How does the present church compare with the early church in this respect?

How do you account for this likeness or difference?

In what way can more interest in preaching the gospel be aroused?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this text?

How did the early disciples regard this commission?

Discuss the universality of the great commission.

What is involved in preaching the gospel to every creature?

#### Redemption from Great Destruction

What is the significance of the "shoot" from the stock of Jesse?

Why was Israel destroyed?

What lesson do we learn from this incident?

Does God still rule in the governments of men? Give reasons for your answer.

What was to be the extent of the influence of the "shoot" of Jesse?

What is said of the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with Christ?

What is said of the rule of the Messiah?

What emphasis does the New Testament give to the Spirit in connection with Christ?

Discuss the spirit and character of the reign of Christ in connection with evangelism.

#### The Glorious Reign of the Prince of Peace

Read and discuss this great statement of scripture.

In what sense are we to understand the reference to the various animals, etc.?

Show how the passage is applicable today.

How did Saul of Tarsus illustrate the principle?

Why was the Messiah spoken of as a "root" of Jesse?

What was an "ensign" and its significance?

In what way was this fulfilled in Jesus? What was his "resting-place"?

#### The Gospel Sent Forth

What facts preceded this section of our lesson?

What suggestions are contained in the question asked by the disciples? Discuss each of them.

How did Jesus reply to them and what is the significance of his reply?

What are "times" and "seasons"?  
 What effect should the Lord's reply have  
 on the tendency on the part of some  
 to speculate regarding the future?  
 Under what circumstances did the apostles  
 receive power?

What does it mean to bear witness for  
 Jesus?  
 What was to be the order of their work?  
 What bearing should this have on our  
 work today?  
 Give the facts of the Lord's ascension.

**Lesson IX—November 26, 1961**

**HELPING THE NEEDY**

**Lesson Text**

**James 1: 27; 1 Tim. 5: 16; Gal. 6: 9, 10; Matt. 25: 34-40**

27 Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

16 If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in;

36 Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink?

38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat."* (Matt. 25: 35.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 4: 16-21.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- November 20. M.....Social Effects of Salvation (Acts 2: 37-47)
- November 21. T.....Condemned for Not Helping Others (Matt. 25: 31-46)
- November 22. W.....Pure Religion and Undefiled (James 1: 1-27)
- November 23. T.....Church Obligation (1 Tim. 5: 1-16)
- November 24. F.....Poor Always with Us (Mark 14: 1-9)
- November 25. S.....Do Good Unto All Men (Gal. 6: 1-10)
- November 26. S.....A Picture of the Heartless (Job 24: 1-25)

TIME.—James, A.D. 60; First Timothy, A.D. 65 to 67; Galatians, A.D. 57; Matthew, A.D. 30.

PLACES.—James, Jerusalem; First Timothy, probably Philippi, and Ephesus; Galatians, Corinth; Matthew, mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—James and the twelve tribes of the Dispersion; Paul, Timothy, the Galatians, Jesus, and his disciples.

**Introduction**

One of the cardinal principles of Christianity is that of benevolence. In fact, if one should seek to analyze and classify the basic duties which

Christ has enjoined upon his people, he would, in the light of the full revelation of the New Testament, find that these duties can be arranged

under three principal headings, namely, (1) mutual edification; (2) evangelizing the lost; and (3) ministering to the poor. No amount of service in the kingdom of Christ will avail in the sight of God, if any one of these items is neglected. One has only to read the last section of our lesson text for today, in order to see that all one has to do to be lost is to neglect or disregard the needy. (Cf. Luke 16: 19-31.)

The law of Moses was very strict regarding the attitude of those who had worldly possessions toward the poor and needy. And those who are familiar with the New Testament are aware of the fact that consideration for the poor is emphasized again and again. When the controversy regarding the circumcision of Gentile Christians was raging, and the apostles and others met in Jerusalem to consider the matter, one of the things which the older apostles called to Paul's attention was that he and Barnabas remember the poor as they preached the gospel to the non-Jewish peoples.

"Only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do." (Gal. 2: 10.) It would be a profitable study to go through the writings of Paul and see how literally true this was in his case. (Cf. 2 Cor. chapters 8, 9.)

There can be no question about the will of the Lord for his people regarding the poor, but it is most unfortunate that some brethren have seen fit to set up some rules of their own devising which make it impossible for the divine will to be carried out in some respects. If those who profess to follow Christ will only remember that it is just as wrong to make a law where God did not make one, as it is to break a law which he did make, fewer obstacles will have to be overcome before the New Testament requirements are met. It is always commendable for brethren to try to make sure that they are loyal to the teaching of Christ, but not to the extent that they go beyond that which is written.

### The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is found in the main text, and will therefore be considered in its due order.

### The Text Explained

#### New Testament Requirements

(James 1: 27; 1 Tim. 5: 16)

*Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.* These words were written to people who were familiar with the elaborate rituals of the Jewish temple worship, and it was easy then, as it is now, for some to get the wrong impression regarding the true significance and value of religion. Amos had told the Jews of his day that they had sought to satisfy themselves with pleasing services; "but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." (See Amos 6: 1-6.) It was never God's will for his people to attend merely to the ceremonies of religion, as such, while manifesting little or no feeling for the needs of their fellow men.

This principle was clearly stated by Micah in these words; "Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God?

shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6: 6-8.)

James does not mean to say that to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world is all of acceptable religion, but he does intend for us to get the idea that such is a practical demonstration of that which is necessary in order to please God. The descriptive terms "pure" and "undefiled" set forth the positive and negative qualities of acceptable religion; and he illustrates what he is saying by examples of service in the field of human relationships and personal integrity. This harmonizes our duty to God, to our

fellow men, and to ourselves (cf. Tit. 2: 11, 12), and makes love to God inspire correctness and kindness of conduct, while making correctness and kindness in conduct the manifestation of love to God.

In saying what he did regarding the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, James, in the words of Vincent, strikes a downright blow at Christian service by proxy, or by mere gifts of money. Pure and undefiled religion demands *personal contact* with the world's sorrow and needs. Those who have the opportunity to do so must *visit* the afflicted, and must visit them *in their affliction*. Those who are able to give money, but who are unwilling to give their personal attention, may actually injure society by their donations; but this is rarely the case with those who visit the haunts of wretchedness, and follow the objects of their care through all phases of life.

How sweet, now heav'nly, is the  
sigh,

When those that love the Lord  
In one another's peace delight,  
And so fulfil the word.

When each can feel his brother's  
sigh,

And with him bear a part;  
When sorrow flows from eye to eye,  
And joy from heart to heart.

Such sympathy with the sorrowing belongs to the essence of a religion which is pure and undefiled. It proceeds from him who is the source of all true sympathy. "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation." (Psalm 68: 5.) Pity is thus ascribed to God, and the same is true in the New Testament. Therefore, to be without compassion is to be unlike God; to have no care for the poor and needy is to manifest a disposition which is diametrically opposed to that of God.

But sympathy with sorrow is not enough; there must also be separation from sin. To keep oneself unspotted from the world does not mean that one is to have no contact with the world; for in that case, as Paul expressed the matter (1 Cor. 5: 10), one would have to go out of the world. The Lord never intended for his people to live away from the world (cf. John 17: 14-16); he wants them to remain in the world, not to partake of

its ways, but rather to be a blessing to it. (Cf. Matt. 5: 13-16.) In other words, God does not want us to be removed from dangers, and be placed like some valuable keep-sake in the guarded rooms of a museum. Instead, he wants us to be exposed to the dust and smoke of the world, where we can help to make people better; and at the same time keep ourselves pure, and grow strong and vigorous by resisting and overcoming the pollutions of the world.

*If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.* Whatever the peculiar situation concerning which Paul wrote may have been, the point to emphasize here is that the church itself is not to be responsible for the care of people who are able to care for themselves, or who have relatives who can care for them. There are those who are called "widows indeed," and it appears that they are not only helpless, but have no close relative who is able to care for them. Paul tells us in verse 5 who is a widow indeed: "Now she that is a widow indeed, and *desolate*, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." Such a person deserves assistance from the church. (Cf. Acts 6: 1-6.)

There can be no question about the duty of the church with respect to the needy and helpless, and the same principle would also apply to any similarly situated person; but it should be observed that nothing is said regarding the particular plan which is to be followed in administering the needed assistance. This is another instance where some people have endeavored to make laws where the Lord has not made any. If people will read all that is said in the New Testament concerning such matters, and then act within the framework of such teaching, they will not go very far wrong in their efforts to please the Lord.

### The Spirit and Scope of Service

(Gal. 6: 9-10)

*And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.* In the preceding verses, Paul had said, "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." And now he tells the brethren not to become discouraged while they continue to sow unto the Spirit; for the harvest-time will certainly come for them, if they do not "relax."

*So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.* This section of our lesson is rendered by Phillips in these words: "Let us not grow tired of doing good, for, unless we throw in our hand, the ultimate harvest is assured. Let us then do good to all men as opportunity offers, especially to those who belong to the Christian household."

The epistle from which these verses are taken was addressed "unto the churches of Galatia," and this means that the injunction set forth is the duty of congregations as such. When an opportunity presents itself to the church to do good, it is the duty of the congregation to act; and that with reference to all men. If any distinction is to be made, due to the church's ability, etc., it must be made in favor of those who belong to the Lord's family. This, of course, is enough to show that the church has an obligation toward those out of the church, if the opportunity presents itself; for "all men" includes both those in and out of the church. The idea that the church as such cannot scripturally help a needy family out of the church does not therefore have any foundation in fact whatsoever.

### **The Lord's Standard of Judgment**

(Matt. 25: 34-40)

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.* It is both interesting and profitable to consider the context of a passage of scripture, when

an effort is made to ascertain its meaning and significance. If this is done in the case now before us, it will be seen that the "judgment scene" of Matt. 25: 31-46 is the third and final illustration which Jesus used to climax his discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ, found in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew.

After discussing the destruction of Jerusalem and the Lord's second coming, in the order here named, Jesus, as he was wont to do, enforced his teaching by three illustrations, namely, (1) the parable of the ten virgins, to show the *need* for being ready when he comes; (2) the parable of the talents, to show *how* to get ready; and (3) the judgment scene, to show *what to expect* in that day. This should be enough to stimulate every congregation of the Lord's people, and every individual member of the church, to greater action with respect to the question of benevolent activity; for Jesus has left no doubt about what to expect when he comes at the last great day.

In referring to himself as "the King," it is interesting to observe that this is the only occasion on which he plainly applied that title to himself during his ministry here among men. It has always been customary in matters of judgment to place those who are approved on the judge's right hand, while those who are condemned are placed on the left hand. In addressing those who are approved, Jesus referred to them as "blessed of my Father," this is, they were the subjects of his benediction because their lives had been such as to please him. (Cf. Matt. 5: 3-12; Eph. 1: 3-6.)

When Jesus said that the kingdom was prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world, he did not mean to say from the beginning of the material world, as set forth in Gen. 1; for if that were true his statement in John 14: 1-3 would have no meaning. It was and is the eternal purpose of God that none but the righteous shall inherit his eternal kingdom, or live with him eternally.

The picture before us may well be called the Lord's standard of judgment, during which he will look into the deepest recesses of our being.

This judgment has to do with things eternal, and it is critical for the soul to a degree which cannot be exaggerated. Any one who reads the words of Jesus aright will be struck at once with the simplicity of his standard of judgment. This significance will be more apparent if it is considered in the light of 1 John 3: 14-18; for there the inspired writer makes it plain that the love of God does not dwell in the person who disregards the needs of his brethren when he has the opportunity to help.

This standard of judgment then, as The Speaker's Bible puts it, is one of helpfulness and kindness to one another, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and ministering unto the ordinary ills which are common to the unfortunate. The Lord's only question is, To what extent have you been a helper, a burden-bearer, a center of active sympathy, service, and love in the midst of your fellow men? God's interest, in other words, is not in who we are and in what we have done in other fields where love for the brethren was ignored. All such considerations are completely brushed aside. The question is simply this, "Did you, or did you not, lend a helping hand whenever you had the opportunity? And it is well to note that the answer must come from life, rather than a mere statement of the lips.

*Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my*

*brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.* It can easily be seen from this response to the Lord's declaration, and his answer to his people, that there will be an element of surprise in the last great day. Or, to state the same thing in other words, many will not be aware that their acts of helpfulness were in reality done to Jesus himself. However, it is probable that the Lord's lesson here was meant to go deeper than that idea.

It is often true that "one thing" is sufficient to reveal the true character of a person. (Cf. Mark 10: 21; Heb. 2: 3.) Jesus frequently taught during his earthly ministry that human goodness or badness flows spontaneously and inevitably, almost unwittingly, out of the deep, inner attitudes of the heart. (See Matt. 12: 33-37.) It was in this last connection that "words," as Jesus said, will be sufficient to justify or condemn. Human goodness, or sinfulness, therefore is deeply rooted in human nature; and it is for that reason that one simple attitude or act in the life of the individual is sufficient to reveal his true state in the sight of God. This is a fearful thought; and we all, with the Wise Man, should say, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4: 23.)

This blinding effect of human action is clearly implied in the text now under consideration, namely, that in all our dealings with men and women we are in reality dealing with the Lord himself, although we may not know it. We must therefore face the fact that on many occasions we have actually smitten the Lord himself. (Read Matt. 25: 41-45; cf. Acts 9: 3-6.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What place does the subject of benevolence have in the Christian system?  
What are the three over-all duties enjoined upon the church?  
What emphasis is given to the subject of helping the needy in the Bible?  
What unfortunate attitude have some taken with reference to this question?

### New Testament Requirements

Under what circumstance did James write the words ascribed to him?  
Why is he referred to as the practical writer of the New Testament?  
What bearing do the words of the Old Testament prophets have on this lesson?  
What does James say that acceptable religion is for this age?  
What two principal duties does he mention?  
What over-all harmony does this illustrate?

Why is it so necessary to "visit" the fatherless and the widows in their affliction?  
 What is the attitude of many in this respect?  
 What does it mean to keep oneself unspotted from the world?  
 What is the will of the Lord for his people in this life?  
 What benefit will come to the faithful from this relationship?  
 What obligation rests upon the church as a whole with reference to the needy?  
 What personal responsibility is mentioned?  
 Who is a "widow indeed"?  
 How did the early church deal with this problem?  
 How do some brethren try to make it appear that the church as such does not have the same responsibility as individuals do?

**The Spirit and Scope of Service**

In what context is this statement from Paul found?  
 What place does the word "opportunity" have in this lesson?  
 To whom is the church itself responsible for benevolent work?  
 Why do some brethren endeavor to show that the church as such is not obligated

to relieve the needs of those out of Christ?

**The Lord's Standard of Judgment**

Discuss the general setting of this section of our lesson.  
 What was the Lord's purpose in presenting the judgment scene?  
 What effect should this have on both congregations and individual Christians?  
 In what peculiar way did the Lord refer to himself?  
 In what sense was the kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world?  
 What can you say of the standard of judgment which the Lord set forth?  
 Why mention only benevolent work?  
 What did the apostle John say regarding this?  
 What, in effect, did Jesus say he wants people to know about themselves in the last day?  
 How did Jesus say the righteous will be affected by his statement?  
 Why didn't they know that they were ministering to the Lord.  
 What important lesson do we learn from all this?  
 What effect should this have on us?  
 Why should we always be careful about the manner in which we treat our fellow Christians?

**Lesson X—December 3, 1961**

**FELLOWSHIP IN WORSHIP**

**Lesson Text**

**Acts 2: 42-47; Heb. 10:22-25; Psalm 122:1, 6-9**

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.

46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water,

23 Let us hold fast the confession

of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised:

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works;

25 Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.

1 I was glad when they said unto me,

Let us go unto the house of Jeho'-vah.

6 Pray for the peace of Je-ru'-sa-lem:

They shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, And prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes,

I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 For the sake of the house of Jeho'-vah our God

I will seek thy good..

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He entered, as his custom was, into, the synagogue on the sabbath day." (Luke 4: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 7: 9-17.

### Daily Bible Readings

November 27. M.....	Description of True Worship (John 4: 19-26)
November 28. T.....	Vain Worship (Matt. 15: 1-9)
November 29. W.....	Ignorant Worship (Acts 17: 16-31)
November 30. T.....	Will Worship (Col. 2: 18-23)
December 1. F.....	John and the Angel (Rev. 22: 1-9)
December 2. S.....	Prayer and Fellowship (Matt. 6: 5-15)
December 3. S.....	Fellowship Through Service (1 John 3: 13-34)

TIME.—Acts, A.D. 30; Hebrews, A.D. 63 or 64; Psalm, B.C., probably during the lifetime of David, exact date unknown.

PLACES.—Acts, Jerusalem; Hebrews, probably written in Rome; Psalm, probably in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—The early Christians in Jerusalem, Paul, the Hebrew Christians, David, and the children of Israel.

### Introduction

Man is by nature a creature of worship; and it is as natural for him to worship, as it is for him to eat. In fact, it is impossible for a responsible person to live and not worship. He may not always worship the right object, or in the right way, but he will worship, nevertheless. This leads us naturally to ask, What is worship? The first thing that we should get clearly fixed in our minds is that worship is not simply the performance of certain acts. It is, on the contrary, something which takes place in the human heart, namely, "the adoring reverence of the human spirit for the Divine." Before there can be any true worship, therefore, the emotions must be aroused; and that is done by the knowledge of who and what God is, and what he has done for us.

The conditions of acceptable worship are clearly set forth in John 4: 24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Many people through the ages have sought to worship God according to their own ideas, but Paul makes it plain in Col. 2: 23 that such cannot be done with the Lords approval. "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." The expression "will-worship" means, according to Thayer, "worship which one devises and prescribes for himself, contrary to the contents and na-

ture of the faith which ought to be directed to Christ." Arndt and Gingrich call such worship "self-made religion," perhaps, "would-be religion." Phillips renders this passage in these words, "I know that these regulations look wise with their self-inspired efforts at worship, their policy of self-humbling, and their studied neglect of the body. But in actual practice they do honour not to God, but to man's own pride."

This principle is clearly applicable to man-made worship of our day. Many things, such as mechanical instrumental music and kindred devices, are widely used in our time, but any one who has any respect for the authority of the New Testament or real scholarship knows that they are matters which "one devises and prescribes for himself," and that they are "contrary to the contents and nature of the faith" which was ordained by the Holy Spirit. Dr. A. K. H. Boyd, in *Sunday Afternoons in a University City*, goes to the heart of the question when he says, "The enjoyment of noble architecture and music is not worship, and may be mistaken for it. The hush which falls on us, walking the aisles of a church of eight hundred- years; the thrill of nerves and heart as the glorious praise begins, whose echoes fall amid fretted vaults and clustered shafts; all that feeling, solemn as it is, has no necessary connection with worshipping God in spirit and in

truth. And we may delude ourselves with the belief that we are offering spiritual worship when it is all a

mere matter of natural emotion, which the most godless man could share." (Page 87.)

### The Golden Text

*"He entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day."* This statement was made by Luke in connection with the Lord's visit to his former home in Nazareth, after the beginning of his Galilean ministry. While Jesus no doubt had been regular in his attendance at the synagogue since his childhood, it seems quite certain that the reference to his custom in this respect was to that which he had been doing since he began his ministry in Galilee, rather than to his life-long custom. Such a practice during his ministry gave him an opportunity to speak to the people. (Cf. Luke 4: 15.) But no violence will be done to the Scriptures, if we think in this connection of a regular habit of going to the place of worship, which was doubtless formed in the case of Jesus early in life, and which continued with him throughout his days upon the earth.

From the information which is available on this subject, it appears that the *synagogue* as a place of worship and instruction came into existence during the time of the Babylonian captivity. The necessity for such a place arose after the people were deprived of their temple and other means of worship in their homeland, when their temple was destroyed and

they were carried into captivity. Every faithful Jewish family was loyal to the synagogue concept of Hebrew life, and we may be sure that they took advantage of all the opportunities for worship and service which it offered to them.

Any thoughtful person today is aware of the fact that a custom is formed by constant repetition of some act, or a series of acts. In the words of Edward Ward Carmack, "An act often repeated hardens into a habit, and a habit long continued petrifies into character." This subject of developing the custom of regular attendance at the place of worship is one of the most important topics that can engage our attention as followers of Christ. The subject involves the possibilities of childhood, and, to a great extent, the ultimate outcome of manhood, as well as our responsibilities connected with both. No Christian home or congregation of disciples of Christ can give too much of the right kind of attention to the question; for if the child is permitted to start his growth and development in the wrong direction, the end may be fatal. But even if the consequences are not fatal, they will, in all probability, involve an endless struggle to bring the child to and keep him in the right way.

### The Text Explained

#### The Practice of the Early Church

(Acts 2: 42-47)

*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.* The words just quoted set forth the principal characteristics of the Christian life to which the first Christians were pledged. God himself set the apostles in the church (1 Cor. 12: 28), and they constituted the visible center of unity of the newly established kingdom. The new disciples were gathered around these men, and from them the doctrine and discipline of the infant church proceeded. The words of the passage we are now considering constitute the first recorded statement of

church history. The early church was united in what it was and in what it did, and this passage sets forth the four elements which express the unity of the Christian life, both then and now. Let us consider each one of them separately.

1. *The apostles' teaching.* The teaching of the apostles was the necessary instrumentally for bringing the new converts into full and complete discipleship. Their rudimentary faith needed careful and continuous instruction; and what was true then is true now. Thus from its very beginning the church of the Lord both had and depended upon a "teaching ministry;" and it can be seen from that which is in the New Testament that it is just as necessary

for us to continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, as it was for the early disciples. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19, 20; John 8: 31, 32; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17.)

2. Fellowship. This fellowship, according to Vincent, is "a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and a mutual, active participation in that interest and in each other." (Cf. Phil. 1: 5, where the same original word signifies co-operation in the widest sense. There were three aspects in which this principle of fellowship was applied to the early church, namely, (1) It is evident that they continued to encourage each other in all spiritual matters. Cf. Heb. 10: 24, 25. (2) They continued to demonstrate their mutual regard for each other's welfare. See Rom. 12: 15; 1 Cor. 12: 25-27. (3) They continued to see to it that regular, systematic provisions were made for practical help as it was needed. Cf. 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.)

3. *The breaking of bread.* There is but little doubt that the reference here is to the Lord's supper. (Cf. Acts 20: 7.) The New Testament nowhere teaches, as some have erroneously thought, that the Lord's supper is the most important part of the worship; but from such passages as Luke 22: 29, 30 and Acts 20: 7 we naturally get the idea that the Lord's day worship is centered around the Lord's table.

4. *The prayers.* These were doubtless their public prayers, although it is possible that they also included their private prayers. Prayer, in its widest sense, is "man's supreme effort to find the right answer to the meaning of life;" and, in its practical application, it may be thought of as "intercourse with an Ideal Companion." With this view of the question, it is easy to see that prayer is not primarily a matter of our talking, God's listening, and then answering, as is so commonly assumed. When Christians "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 17), or continue "steadfastly in prayer" (Rom. 12: 12), they are enjoying continuous fellowship with an Ideal Companion. (Cf. 1 John 1: 6, 7.)

*And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold*

*their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.*

If verse 42 emphasizes the worship of the early church, then the verses just quoted tell us something of the fellowship of those who were devoted to the Lord. Hall L. Calhoun notes that the broadest bond of fellowship known to the world is that which comes through worship. Such fellowship does not take into consideration race, color, age, sex, condition climate, or custom. (Cf. Col. 3: 11.) Fellowship through worship is the one universal bond of brotherhood, according to the great purpose of the Creator of men. And not only is it the broadest bond of fellowship; it is also the most beneficent provision which Jehovah has made for his creatures.

Worship, continues Brother Calhoun, is the means through which man takes on or grows into an ever-increasing likeness to God; and there is no other way except through worship to the attainment of this, man's highest privilege, namely, likeness in character to the only true God. It is difficult to understand why there are so many who profess to believe in the one and only God, but who fail to comprehend anything worthwhile as it respects the worship which is their privilege. Those who truly love the Lord will worship him in the beauty of holiness.

### The Manner of Approach

(Heb. 10: 22-25)

*Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and having our body washed with pure water.* The entire paragraph, verses 19-25 of the tenth chapter of Hebrews, is an exhortation to greater diligence, purity, constancy, and fidelity in the worship and service of God. The writer had already exhorted his readers regarding the approach to God in these words, "Let us therefore draw near with boldness

to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." (Heb. 4: 16.) And now he tells something of the manner in which one must approach the throne of the Most High. For all practical purposes, verses 22, 23 describe a person who has obeyed the gospel, and who has his trust in God who promised him salvation from sin and the blessings of the Christian life. Since the writer was addressing Hebrew Christians, he used many of the terms of cleansing from sin which belonged to the ceremonial law of Moses which were familiar to them. That law, of course, had passed away (Col. 2: 14), but the ideas which the terms Paul used contained were still applicable under the new order. (Cf. types and anti-type.)

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.* These verses contain three specific exhortations, namely, (1) *Let us cling to the faith which we have confessed.* The entire New Testament is a system of faith, in contrast with the legal system of the Mosaic covenant; and it is only by faith in the Lord's plan, which is made perfect by obedience, that one can be saved. Those who become Christians confess their faith in Christ, and the hope which is theirs and to which they must hold fast is the result of their faith. And so, in the words of Milligan, "Let us hold fast the faith which we have confessed and cling to the hope which it ministers."

(2) *Let us take an interest in the salvation of our fellow Christians.* There is no place for selfishness in the religion of our Lord; and so, if we expect to be saved ourselves, we must make an effort to bring our brother with us. The term "provoke," of course, is used in a good sense here. (3) *Let us be faithful in our attendance of the meetings of the church for worship.* This letter was written during a time of persecution (cf. 12: 4), and many were tempted to abstain from the social gatherings

of the brethren for periods of worship. The reference is not to one meeting on the Lord's day, but to "our own assembling together," which means any and all of their meetings. Jesus had foretold the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24); and since this letter was written just a few years before that great catastrophe occurred, it is almost certain that that was the "day" which the Hebrew Christians saw drawing nigh.

### The Spirit and Purpose of Worship

(Psalm 122: 1, 6-9)

*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah.* (Read also verses 2-5.) This part of our lesson clearly sets forth the spirit which should characterize those who enter the place of worship. Such a privilege was to the psalmist a matter of gladness and thanksgiving; and that is the way that we ought to feel about it today. If that were true, we would never absent ourselves from the assembly of the saints, if it is at all possible for us to be there. Worship was a joy to the man who composed the psalm from which this portion of our lesson is taken, because his heart was in it; and that must be true of us. People who feel this way about the place of worship can say with Coleridge every Lord's day,

O sweeter than the marriage feast,  
 'Tis sweeter far to me,  
 To walk together to the kirk  
 With a goodly company.

—The Ancient Mariner.

Hastings observes that in the church of the New Testament emphasis is laid on the spirituality of worship, and the presence of God is no longer limited or localized, as it was during the Old Testament period. Jesus made this plain to the woman at the well (John 4: 21-24), but in saying what he did to her, the Lord did not teach that it was no longer necessary to have special places and assemblies for worship. Dr. Hastings continues, And so we find the church coming to birth at Pentecost, and wherever the gospel was received believers gathered into groups for corporate worship. If in time some grew negligent the apostolic injunction was given, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," for a

solitary Christian was barely conceivable.

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God I will seek thy good.* Although this was written during the Mosaic dispensation, the principles are applicable now; and it is for this reason that we can learn from this

passage the great purposes of the worship which God has ordained for his people. We should pray for the peace of the church and the prosperity of the kingdom, both for our own sake, and that of our brethren and companions; and all, of course, to the glory of God. "For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God I will seek thy good." This should always be the great motive which prompts all that we do in divine worship; for in no other way can we grow into his likeness.

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, places, and persons.

#### Introduction

How is man related to the question of worship?  
What is worship?  
What is always necessary before we can worship God acceptably?  
What are the conditions of acceptable worship?  
What have men through the ages sought to do with respect to worship?  
Why is it that they cannot succeed?  
What signs of "will-worship" are seen today among professed Christians?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Luke make this statement regarding Jesus?  
Why did the Jewish people place such great stress on the synagogue worship?  
In what way are customs formed?  
Why is the custom we are considering today so important?

#### The Practice of the Early Church

What were the practices of worship which characterized the early church?  
What place did the apostles occupy in the church and why?  
What was the apostles' teaching?  
Why was such teaching so essential?  
Why do so many professed followers of Christ fail to realize this today?  
What does it mean to continue stedfastly?  
What fellowship was Luke speaking about in this connection?  
Discuss the "fellowship" which characterized the early church?  
What do you think of our fellowship today? Give reason for your answer.  
In what "breaking of bread" did the first Christians continue stedfastly?

Why do some people call this the most important part of the worship?  
What prayers did Luke refer to? Give reasons for your answer.  
What is the basic meaning of prayer?  
What fellowship resulted from the worship of the early disciples?  
In what way only may the Lord's people grow into his likeness?

#### The Manner of Approach

How are we taught to approach God in worship?  
Is it possible for people who are not Christians to approach him in this respect? Give reason for your answer.  
Why did Paul speak of obedience to the gospel as he did in this part of our lesson?  
What three exhortations did the writer set before his brethren?  
How may one hold fast the confession of his hope?  
Why speak of the faithfulness of God in this connection?  
Why must we take an interest in the salvation of our fellow Christians?  
What meetings did the apostle exhort the Hebrews not to forsake?  
What "day" did they see drawing nigh? Give reasons for your answer?

#### The Spirit and Purpose of Worship

What spirit should always characterize those who worship God?  
What effect would this have, if we all felt this way about the matter?  
What emphasis does the New Testament place on worship?  
How did the early church feel about this question?  
Why can't Christians form the practice of worshipping alone?  
What is the over-all purpose of worship?

### Lesson XI—December 10, 1961

## CHRISTIANITY IN BUSINESS

### Lesson Text

**Eph. 6: 5-9; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19; Deut. 24: 14, 15**

5 Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in

singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not in the way of eye-service, as

men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

17 Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

GOLDEN TEXT.—"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 1-5.

### Daily Bible Readings

December 4. M.....	Religion in Business (Deut. 24: 1-18)
December 5. T.....	Principles of Stewardship (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)
December 6. W.....	Obligations of Christians (1 Cor. 4: 1-7)
December 7. T.....	Faithful Activity Rewarded (Mark 10: 23-31)
December 8. F.....	Injustice Offensive to God (Amos 5: 6-15)
December 9. S.....	Impartial Judgment (Eccles. 5: 10-20)
December 10. S.....	Providing Things Honest (Rom. 12: 17-21)

TIME.—Ephesians, A.D. 62; First Timothy, A.D. 65-67; Deuteronomy, 1451 B.C.

PLACES.—Ephesians, Rome; First Timothy, Philippi and Ephesus; Deuteronomy, the land of Moab.

PERSONS.—Paul, those to whom he wrote, Moses, and the children of Israel.

### Introduction

The term "business" is used in the sense of work, or the activity in which people are engaged for a livelihood and in order that they may have means with which they can accomplish their desires in life. God ordained work from the very beginning. "And Jehovah God took the man, and put into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." (Gen. 2: 15.) But after sin entered into the world, that which would have always been a pleasant occupation took on the aspect of painful drudgery. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is *life* indeed.

14 Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates:

15 In his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it (for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it); lest he cry against thee unto Je-ho'-vah, and it be sin unto thee.

of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3: 17-19.)

The complex society in which we live makes it absolutely essential that the majority of mankind maintain a relation with others in the matter of the work in which they are engaged. Very few people can live wholly independent lives in this respect. For the most part, this relationship is known as the employer-employee relationship; and that is wherein the emphasis of our lesson for today be-

longs. It is both right and necessary for all who are physically and mentally able to work, regardless of their attitude toward the Lord; but there is an added responsibility for those who are the Lord's people. They are following the Lord Jesus Christ, and the religion which came from him must influence all the areas of their lives, including that of business relationships.

Work, like many of the other relations of life, has inherited some sentiments which are not in keeping with the spirit of Christianity; and a word about that phase of the subject is not out of place here. On the one hand, there has come down through the years an aristocratic attitude toward work. The "gentleman," until comparatively recent times, was a man who did not need to work for a living; while on the other hand, there were those who were compelled to labor for their daily bread. The laborer, and especially those who engaged in manual

labor, were patronized by the people of leisure because they needed his services; but he was not recognized as being eligible to the privileges of the "upper" class. This resulted in a social stigma being placed on labor. This was especially true in the "old world" before this country was settled.

But when America began to be settled the conditions of pioneer life were such that strenuous labor was necessary on the part of practically every able-bodied person, and such was accepted as a self-evident good. Thus from the very beginning of this nation it was taken for granted that all who are able to work will want to have some specific profession or occupation. Christianity also began as a religion of working people, and it has always recognized the full dignity of the laboring individual; and, as Gerald Birney Smith notes, Christian ethics presuppose that every moral individual will want to be engaged in a useful occupation.

### The Golden Text

*"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."* This is Luke's version of the Golden Rule. It is expressed by Matthew in these words: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7: 12.) This is the greatest statement of the moral principle which should always govern people in their relationship with each other that was ever spoken upon this earth. If the rule announced by Jesus were put into practice everywhere, the results which would follow would stagger the imagination.

Jesus, of course, was the only person who was a living embodiment of the Golden Rule, but any one who realizes the spirit of Christianity knows that every follower of Christ is expected to do his best to make this principle the dominant factor in his dealings with his fellow men. This means that we must begin the

practice of its application with ourselves, rather than to expect that it be applied to us by others. As ye would that men do to you, you do to them.

One of the most striking characteristics of the teaching of Jesus is its practicableness. There is nothing about his program for his people which cannot be put into practice. His purpose in setting forth the moral and spiritual truths and principles which are found in the New Testament was not to gratify intellectual curiosity by unveiling divine mysteries, but rather to give guidance for daily living. Religious information, if God is to be pleased, must issue forth in genuine goodness of character and conduct. "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." (John 13: 17.) "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.)

### The Text Explained

#### Mutual Responsibilities

(Eph. 6: 5-9)

*Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your*

*masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from*

*the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.*

Notwithstanding the fact that the passage just quoted sets forth a state of society which no longer exists in civilized countries, the principle of mutual responsible obligation between employers and employees which it contains is still applicable today. During the time when Paul wrote these words the world was not divided between "masters and servants," but between "masters and slaves." The slaves were of many kinds and classifications—those who worked in the fields, in the houses, artisans, craftsmen, clerks, tutors, nurses who cared for the children and the aged; in short, slaves of all sorts, who ministered to the wants of their owners, or who were let out for hire. (It should be noted that the marginal reading for "servants" is *bondservants*, which means that they belonged to their masters and were not merely employed by them, as we understand and use the word servant today.)

But even in the days of Paul, Christian slaves had a moral and spiritual obligation to their owners, regardless of their character. "Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the *froward*. For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently; but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." (1 Pet. 2: 18-20.)

Employees today are not expected to manifest the spirit of slaves in their attitude toward their employers; but those who are Christians are required to manifest the spirit of Christ; and that spirit is set forth in the section of our lesson now under consideration, and the quotation from Peter. But as matters now

stand, those who work for others are often placed in a position where they not only have a relationship with their employer, but also, and sometimes more directly, with the labor union. Many thoughtful people recognize the need for organized labor, but all right thinking people deplore the abuses which characterize many areas of that field. But regardless of the situations which may obtain, the Lord's people must do their best to discharge their obligation toward those for whom they work.

Someone has observed that it is more difficult to be a Christian master, than a Christian servant; and that same difficulty is apparently present in the more tolerable relation of employer and employee. The temptation in every position of authority is to be proud, arbitrary, and harsh. The proper use of power is probably one of the most difficult lessons is life to learn. And, too, the master or employer is usually distinguished by special force of character and ability, and in many instances this tends to make him unsympathetic and inconsiderate with men of slower wit or less energy. Not every person can say with Dr. Arnold that the noblest sight on earth to him was God's blessings resting upon an inferiority of talent, where a dull boy was doing his utmost at his work. It is easy to see from the Lord's parable of the talents that the one-talent man would have received the same commendation from his lord, if he, like the other two, had done the best that he could; but the sad story is that he did not. However, we gather from the judgment scene which follows (Matt. 25: 31-46) that those in position to be helpful to the less fortunate have an obligation toward them. This is a lesson which Christian employers should learn.

Turning again to the master-slave relationship of New Testament times, it is a noticeable fact that no inspired writer ever made an attack on slavery as an institution. They did not command, or even suggest, that masters free their slaves; but they did teach a spirit which moderated the harshness of the system, and which would ultimately destroy it by peaceful means. They relied upon the spirit of the gospel, and the prin-

ciples which it sets forth to the effect that all men are brethren in Christ and alike servants of one heavenly Master, to destroy the whole institution. It was Jesus who taught that the greatest among his people were not those who exercised authority over others, but rather those who ministered to them. (See Matt. 20: 25-28.)

When all men who are in business, both employers and employees, and especially those who profess to follow the Lord, will endeavor to see to it that the Golden Rule affects their lives, their efforts will be more productive and they will be happier. No one, then, would try to take undue advantage over another. In commenting on this section of our lesson, Hastings notes that the Christian ideal is that of service. This is true because, as we have just seen, Jesus taught that it is better to serve men than to rule with the hand of authority. It is further true that the aim of Christianity is to save the world by serving it; by living for it; working for it, praying for it, and dying for it. Christianity abolished the curse of slavery long before it abolished itself. It freed the slave long before it destroyed the system which held him in bondage. (Cf. 1 Cor. 7: 21, 22.) The power of the Christian religion rescued the bondman from mere servitude and made him a servant; it freed his soul and enfranchised his manhood. Before any man can put a soul into his work, he must have one to put into it; and it was Jesus who breathed a soul into men, and they, in turn, put that soul into their work. This is the New Testament philosophy of Christianity in business.

### A Charge to the Rich

(1 Tim. 6: 17-19)

*Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.*

If there were nothing else said in

the New Testament regarding the possession of wealth on the part of the Lord's people, this one passage alone would be sufficient to show that it is not wrong, in and of itself, for a Christian to be rich in material wealth. The two important questions to consider in connection with riches are (1) the ways and means by which one comes into possession of them, and (2) his attitude toward and use of them after they are in his custody. Luke cites three instances of rich men in his narrative, that of the rich fool (12: 13-21); the rich man of 16: 19-31; and the rich young ruler (18: 18-24); and it is interesting to note that each of them failed in exactly the same way. There is not a single implication that either of them obtained his wealth by dishonest or unrighteous means; but it is a noteworthy fact that all three of them had a selfish interest in that which he possessed. They were therefore unwilling to use that which they had for the glory of God and the good of their fellow men.

There is no better statement regarding the proper use of wealth than the one made by Jesus in Luke 16: 9-13. "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. 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. 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? No servant 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." (Read also Luke 16: 1-8.)

As Charles Foster Kent points out, Jesus not only appreciated the value of wealth rightly acquired, but also taught the wise ways in which to use it. However, he laid down principles, rather than specific laws; and then leaves each individual to apply them in keeping with the circumstances which may surround him. He taught that if a man allows the quest of

wealth to become his master, then he becomes an object slave, subject to the most cruel of tyrants. But if he regards wealth as a servant and uses it to minister to his highest interests and those of society, he not only will be blessed himself, but will also glorify God which is the highest achievement possible to him.

"The wise administration of wealth as a social trust in itself also contains great potentiality for character development. The problem of what Jesus calls 'converting wealth into treasures that can be stored up in heaven' is not always easy, but it is one of the most important that every man has to solve, whether he has much or little. It is also fortunate that our complex modern society offers him many aids in solving it. If he but face the problem of the right use of wealth frankly and fearlessly, he will learn through rich experience the supreme truth underlying Jesus' great beatitude: Happier is he who gives than he who receives." (The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus, p. 234.)

### The Prompt Payment of Wages

(Deut. 24: 14, 15)

*Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates: in his day thou shalt*

*give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it (for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it); lest he cry against thee unto Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee.*

If one did not know something about human nature, it would be difficult to think that a man capable of conducting a business would have to be told to be kind to a poor and helpless working man. But it frequently happens that people who are poorly fed, poorly clothed, and poorly housed have to work for the more fortunate without the benefit of that which rightfully belongs to them. (Cf. Lev. 19: 13.) "Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as Are. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you." (James 5: 1-6.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

In what sense is the term business used in this lesson?  
When and under what circumstances was work ordained for man?  
What change was made regarding it when sin entered the world?  
What relationship does our complex society make necessary?  
What added responsibility do Christians have in this respect?  
Why do some people attach a social stigma to laboring people?  
How did the early settlers of this country regard work?  
What relation did early Christianity have with working people?

### The Golden Text

Compare Luke's and Matthew's version of the Golden Rule.  
What use did Jesus make of this rule?  
What use does he expect his followers to make of it?  
How alone may people be benefited by the teaching of Jesus?

### Mutual Responsibilities

What was the state of society which Paul refers to in this section?  
What is the difference between "slaves" and "servants"?  
What admonition did Paul give the bond-servants of his day and why?  
What additional idea regarding this did Peter set forth?  
What attitude should employees today manifest toward their employers?  
What should be the attitude of Christian people toward labor unions?  
What great temptation often comes to masters or employers?  
What should be their attitude toward those who work for them?  
In what way did the New Testament writers deal with the evils of slavery?  
What effect will the Golden Rule always have on business?  
What is always necessary before one can put his best into his work?

### A Charge to the Rich

Is it wrong for Christians to have riches?  
Give reasons for your answers.  
What two important questions are involved in this relationship?

What great lesson did Luke set before his readers in this respect? Discuss the attitude and the failure of each of these rich men.  
 In what way did Jesus deal with this question?  
 How may one make friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness?  
 Discuss some of the principles Jesus stated regarding these matters.  
 How does modern society help us in making the right use of money?

What is necessary on our part, if we learn these lessons?

**The Prompt Payment of Wages**

Why is it necessary for some people to be told to be kind to the poor?  
 Discuss the over-all attitude of the law of Moses regarding this subject?  
 What did James say about the matter?  
 Why would any one want to defraud working people out of their wages?  
 What will be the Lord's final attitude toward such offenders?

**Lesson XII—December 17, 1961**

**THE CHRISTIAN AND SELF-CONTROL**

**Lesson Text**

**Rom. 14: 21; Dan. 1: 8-16; Gal. 5: 22-26**

21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do *anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth.

8 But Dan'-iel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God made Dan'-iel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Dan'-iel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king.

11 Then said Dan'-iel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Dan'-iel, Han-ani'-ah, Mish'-a-el, and Az-a-ri'-ah:

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be

looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties.

16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 Meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.

26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity."* (1 Tim. 4: 12.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Psalm 66: 1-20.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- December 11. M..... Courage in Living Right (Dan. 1: 8-13)
- December 12. T..... Courage Rewarded (Dan. 1: 14-21)
- December 13. W..... Importance of Self-control (1 Cor. 9: 19-27)
- December 14. T..... Personal Testimony (Psalm 66: 16-20)
- December 15. F. Denial for the Sake of Others (Rom. 14: 23-33)
- December 16. S..... Seeking the Good of Others (1 Cor. 10. 23-33)
- December 17. S..... Purity of Body (1 Cor. 6: 12-20)

TIME.—Romans, A.D. 58; Daniel, 606 B.C.; Galatians, A.D. 57.

PLACES.—Romans and Galatians, Corinth; Daniel, Babylon.

PERSONS.—Paul and those who whom he wrote, Daniel, his three Hebrew companions, and certain Babylonian officials.

## Introduction

Those who are acquainted with the New Testament are aware of the various extremes which are set forth with respect to fundamental issues regarding the life which is pleasing to the Lord. This life may be described as a "controlled life," for no one can, with the Lord's approval, give free reins to his own fleshly desires and at the same time be acceptable to God. And on the other hand, the asceticism which characterized some was likewise unacceptable to the Lord. (Cf. 1 Tim. 4: 1-3.) Man has a soul, body, and spirit, and he must live before God and in the presence of his fellow men; and all of this means that he should endeavor to develop and maintain a way of life which will enable him to fulfil his highest obligations toward God, his fellow men, and himself. (Cf. Tit. 2: 11, 12.)

All areas and faculties of our being are given to us to use, and our life becomes worthwhile in the sight of the Lord, in the true sense of the word, only when we are using them all in due subordination to each other. This desired end can be attained only by a severe struggle; but the struggle for a controlled life does not aim at the destruction of any of those characteristics which God has given to us, or at the refusal to allow any of them their proper expression. They are all necessary parts to our complete manhood. Our passions and desires, for example, are

as essential as our intellects and our wills. We obtain self-control, not by destroying our passions and our desires, but by keeping them in their proper place, by restricting them to their proper channels. By directing them toward their proper objects. A passionless man, no less than a passionate man, fails in this attainment. In the one instance a chord is lacking, in the other it is sounded too loudly; and in both cases alike the full harmony is marred.

Jesus makes self-control the first condition of discipleship. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, *let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*" (Matt. 16: 24.) This, of course, means self-control in its widest sense, and applies to every appetite, emotion, fancy, or purpose which a man can cherish. Some one has said that self-control is the power of keeping oneself well in hand, of governing one's passions, of restraining himself from outbursts of anger, from excessive devotion to pleasure or riches, or anything else which concerns this world. His mind must be set on Christ, rather than on himself. Self-control has been compared to the captain on the bridge of the soul, directing the frail vessel's course through wind and wave, so that it may not be driven hither and thither at the mercy of the elements, or tossed a hopeless wreck upon the shore.

## The Golden Text

*"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity."* It is always helpful in the study of any passage of scripture to consider it in its proper context. Paul's purpose in writing his first letter to Timothy is clearly stated in the first part of the epistle: "As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless gen-

ealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a disposition of God which is in faith; so do I now." (1 Tim. 1: 3, 4.)

After writing at length regarding these heretical teachers (read 1 Tim. 1: 3-20), Paul next devoted two chapters, as the book is divided in our Testament, to regulations for church life, or, the foundations of sound doctrine. And then in chapter 4 the apostle has some special instruction for Timothy himself, in which he clearly defined the false teaching as a spurious asceticism (verses 1-5),

and set before him the proper method of combating the heresy in question (verses 6-16). This method has two parts, namely, (1) Timothy's own personal example of genuine holiness (verses 6-10), and a faithful ministry on his part (verses 11-16). The golden text therefore is a part of the method by which Timothy was to combat the error of his day, and the same method is equally applicable for error of our day.

While Timothy was not just entering into young manhood, he was much younger than Paul, and probably younger than the false teachers in question. It was necessary therefore in rebuking older people (cf. 1 Tim.

5: 1), and especially teachers in the church, that he conduct himself so as to have respect of those involved. (Cf. Tit. 2: 7, 8, 15; 1 Cor. 16: 10, 11.) The best way to cause men to respect a youthful teacher of the truth is for him to become an example or pattern to them; and Paul told his son in the gospel in just what particulars to show himself an ensample, that is, an example or pattern, namely, in all that he spoke in public or in private, in the way he lived each day, in love, faith, and purity, all of which indicates, as Alford suggests, simplicity of holy motive followed out in consistency of holy action.

### The Text Explained

#### For Thy Brother's Sake

(Rom. 14: 21)

*It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.* One of the important lessons which every Christian should learn is his responsibility toward his fellow Christians, and especially those who are weak; and in no place is the principle which should govern them in this attitude more plainly stated than in Rom. 14 and 1 Cor. 8. There are many things which the Lord's people could do without incurring sin, if no one else is to be considered; but in the case of those who are immature and weak, even things which are indifferent in and of themselves must be foregone, if their indulgence will have an adverse effect upon the weak. The passage now under consideration has reference to things which may or may not be engaged in, so far as one's standing before God is concerned; but as already stated, even these things must be omitted if a weaker brother is caused to stumble. There are, of course, matters which involve the faith of the gospel, and no one has any choice with reference to them except to act according to their teaching. (See Gal. 1: 6-10.)

The passage now under consideration can best be understood in the light of the preceding part of the chapter. The entire fourteenth chapter of Romans may be divided into two parts, namely, (1) Christian freedom and fraternal tolerance regarding matters of indifference, 1-12; and (2) the law of brotherly love is

broader than the rule of personal feeling. No better commentary can be found on the passage which constitutes this section of our lesson than the verses which immediately precede it. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, than no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth."

The golden text not only covers the eating of meat which had not been adversely affected by its being offered in sacrifice to idols, but it also covers *anything* which will result in the downfall of a weak brother, that is, anything which the stronger Christian considers innocent for him to do.

He should always try to take into consideration the possible effect of his actions on others before he engages in them. It is always wise to keep away from anything which might cause another to stumble. And if this is true of things which are indifferent within themselves, it is certainly also true of things which are wrong in and of themselves. The only way that one can be justified in giving offense to others is by a faithful performance of the revealed will of God, and that must always be done in the spirit of Christ.

### Personal Responsibility

(Dan. 1: 8-16)

*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.* This determination on the part of Daniel, which no doubt was shared by his three Hebrew companions, grew out of the plan which the king had in mind for them. "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring in certain of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal and of the nobles; youths in whom was no blemish, but well-favored and skillful in all wisdom, and endued with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace; and that he should teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily portion of the king's dainties, and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years; that at the end thereof they should stand before the king." (Dan. 1: 3-5.) Those who were chosen included Daniel and the three who are popularly known as the three Hebrew children.

Daniel is probably singled out as the leader of and spokesman for the group, and his resolution, which implies a decided one, must have resulted from his knowledge of that which was pleasing to God. He wanted, above all things, to be pure in the sight of God, and he evidently knew that what would make him acceptable to God would also be for his highest good. This reveals something of the strength of character

which was his. He was wholly unwilling to subscribe to the philosophy which encourages one who is in Rome to do as Rome does! Instead, Daniel in effect said, "Although I am in Babylon, I will do that which God requires. He was like Moses in this respect. He chose what the king's household would call the mean things of life, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Someone has well said that he who is to interpret the divine revelation must not feed on the dainties, nor drink from the intoxicating cup, of this world. And it is encouraging to know that the name of Daniel reached a height of exalted influence, along with those of Noah and Job, which must have made a lasting impression on the minds of pious Jews throughout their history. (See Ezek. 14: 14, 20.) Although Daniel had steadfastly determined in his own heart not to accept the designated food and drink, it is noteworthy that he sought to change the mind of the prince of the eunuchs by a polite request, rather than by an outright demand. This is a fine illustration of "let no man despise thy youth."

*Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king.* The action of Daniel in the situation now before us is a fine example of the manner in which obstacles may be successfully overcome, and at the same time bring the opposition around to the same point of view. The prince of the eunuchs was under strict orders from the king, and he had his own self to consider; but when Daniel pursued a course which would not cause the officer in charge to get into trouble himself, he was able to get what he himself knew was the best, and at the same time gain the good will of the man who was directly over him. God will always make those who fear him and act accordingly to find kindness and compassion in the sight of those who are reasonable. (Cf. Joseph before Pharaoh.)

*Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.*

The proposal which Daniel made shows the confidence which he had in the superior wisdom of God, in contrast with that of the king. (Cf. John 1: 46.) It is always safe to rely on anything which God commands; and when that is done, those who champion the cause of truth will always be victorious in the end.

*So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.* The term "pulse" indicates leguminous plants which produce edible seeds, such as beans, lentils, and peas; and as used here it probably signifies vegetable food in general. This was God's plan for his people, but, as indicated in the text, it was the responsibility of Daniel and his companions to discharge their own obligation in seeing that the plan worked in their own lives. In other words, they had to control themselves according to God's will. (Cf. Isa. 3: 9.)

### The End in View

(Gal. 5: 22-26)

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.* It was pointed out earlier in this lesson that man has a threefold relationship in this world, namely, toward God, his fellow men, and himself; and it can

easily be seen that that threefold relationship is covered in that which Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit. The first three concern our relation to God, the second three, to our fellow men, and the last three, to ourselves, the last one being "self-control," which comprehends every form of temperance, and includes the mastery of all appetites, tempers, and passions. It is holding oneself within due limits, as it respects pleasures, duties, and everything else. All of this is included in the meaning of crucifying the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

*If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.* This is a reminder to the effect that we must order our lives according to the direction of the Spirit, if it can be truthfully said that we live by the Spirit; and the only way that this can be done is by following the instruction which is given by the Spirit, as contained in the New Testament.

It is very difficult to over-estimate the value of self-control in any life, and especially that of a Christian. If the denial of self is the first condition of discipleship (Matt. 16: 24), then the lack of self-control is the beginning of sin; and it also makes progress in the right direction impossible. This is true because the lack of self-control means dissipation of energy and the waste of God-given power. But the attainment of self-control gives to life the very things which the lack of it deprives one of.

The greatest asset which one has in this life is his character, and it is only by self-control that the proper kind of character can be builded. This should give us some idea of the great value of self-control; and its value is greatest where the most has to be controlled. The temperaments of people vary to the extent that one person may have vastly more to control than his neighbor; and this fact, along with the specific teaching of the New Testament on the question, should greatly aid us in our efforts to refrain from judging our fellow men unkindly.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, places, and persons.

### Introduction

What place does self-control have in the Christian life?

What two extremes are usually seen in this connection?  
 What relationships does man have which make a "controlled life" essential?  
 What does the "controlled life" imply regarding man's normal being?  
 What is the basic difference between self-control and destruction of our God-given faculties?  
 What place does self-control have in the personal teaching of Jesus?  
 Give a comprehensive definition of self-control.

**The Golden Text**

Under what circumstances was this text written?  
 How did Paul instruct Timothy to combat error?  
 What is the meaning of "Let no man despise thy youth"?  
 What is the best way for youth to command respect of older people?

**For Thy Brother's Sake**

What responsibility does every Christian have toward others, and especially the weak?  
 What general class of things is Paul discussing in this section?  
 How does this differ from one's faith in the gospel itself?  
 Give a brief analysis of the fourteenth chapter of Romans.  
 To what extent is the principle set forth in this section of our lesson applicable today?

**Personal Responsibility**

Why did Daniel form the purpose set forth in the text?  
 Why did the king prescribe such a diet for those young men?  
 Why was Daniel alone mentioned in this connection?

Why was he determined not to follow the diet prescribed by the king?  
 What does this indicate regarding his character?  
 How did he go about getting his request granted?  
 How does his attitude in this respect illustrate the golden text?  
 What helpful lesson may we learn from this for our own benefit?  
 Why did God make Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of his superior?  
 In what way did Daniel answer the objection of the steward?  
 How did Daniel's proposal show his confidence in the way of God for him?  
 In what way can this be made applicable to us?  
 What was the result of the test which was made?  
 What is the meaning of "pulse"?  
 In what way did Daniel demonstrate his own sense of responsibility?  
 How does his attitude fit into the overall thought of the lesson?

**The End In View**

How does Paul's statement of the fruit of the Spirit fit into the threefold relationship which every man has?  
 Show how the three "triplets" apply to the relationships in question.  
 What does Paul mean by crucifying the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof?  
 What is essential in order to walk by the Spirit?  
 How alone can this be done?  
 Discuss the value of self-control.  
 What are some of the results of the lack of this virtue?  
 What is the relation between self-control and character-building?

**Lesson XIII—December 24, 1961**

**WINNING OTHERS TO CHRIST**

**Lesson Text**

**John 1: 40-45; Prov. 11: 30; Dan. 12: 2, 3; James 5: 19, 20**

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 saith 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.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;  
 And he that is wise winneth souls.

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 And they that are wise shall

shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

19 My brethren, if any among you

err from the truth, and one convert him;

20 Let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He that will, let him take the water of life freely."* (Rev. 22: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 11: 19-21.

### Daily Bible Readings

December 18. M.....	Christ, the Friend of Sinners (Luke 15: 1-32)
December 19. T.....	Missionary Heralds (Acts 13: 1-12)
December 20. W.....	Carrying the Gospel to Others (Acts 16: 6-10)
December 21. T.....	Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10: 1-48)
December 22. F.....	Personal Evangelism (John 1: 35-51)
December 23. S.....	Christ and Zaccheus (Luke 19: 5-10)
December 24. S.....	Philip and the Eunuch (Acts 8: 26-40)

TIME.—John, A.D. 27; Proverbs, 1000 B.C.; Daniel, 534 B.C.; James, probably about A.D. 60.

PLACES.—John, Bethany beyond the Jordan; Proverbs, Jerusalem; Daniel, Babylon; James, unknown.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his early disciples; Solomon; Daniel; and James.

### Introduction

The apostle Paul who knew the meaning of salvation said, "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1: 15); and Jesus himself declared that "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19: 10.) The motive behind all of this is expressed in the Golden Text of the Bible: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16.)

It is not God's will that a single soul be lost. "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.) "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.) This is the Divine side of the picture, and we do not get the full story until we realize that the work of winning others to Christ

has been placed in the hands of the Lord's people. So far as the record goes, Deity has not personally led a man to salvation since the gospel message was placed in the hands of men. (Cf. Acts 22:10.)

Just before Jesus left his disciples to return to the Father, he gave them the great commission which contemplates the salvation of all men. Mark's record of that charge is expressed in these words: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) Paul tells us that 'the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.' (Rom. 1: 16, 17.) Those therefore who would bring others to Christ must go equipped with the gospel message; for in no other way can they lead men to that righteousness which is acceptable to God. Cf. Rom. 10: 1-4.

### The Golden Text

He that *will, let him take the water of life freely.*" No one can read the New Testament aright with-

out coming to the conclusion that salvation is an individual matter. Every person who is saved must person-

ally respond to the gospel message. There is no such thing as "group salvation," without personal responsibility on the part of each individual. This principle is forcefully illustrated by the calling of penitent Israel from their several dispersions. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will beat off his fruit from the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt; and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." (Isa. 27: 12.) "One by one" not only is the manner in which the people of the world are saved, but the expression also emphasizes the importance of the individual. The gospel is proclaimed to the masses, but it is the individual who responds to it. It is true that all who hear may respond, but they do so as individuals. It is always "he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

The golden text for today is taken from the closing chapter of the New Testament, and, of course, of the Bible. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely." The great invitation to be saved is

extended by the Spirit through the apostles and the prophets, while the work of proclaiming the message to the lost is the responsibility of the church, the bride of Christ (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15); but the response of faith on the part of the hearers is an individual act. Individual Christians are responsible for preaching the gospel, and others are individually responsible for their reaction to the gospel message.

If just one soul were brought to  
Christ—just one,  
By any effort I have made, or work  
have done—  
That's worth a life of earnest toil  
or sorrow,  
To waken to the gladsome light of  
such a morrow.  
If just one soul were saved to  
Christ from evil's blight,  
And that soul leading to the light  
still other souls—  
Father, mother, children win—each  
to the end of time,  
Leading souls to him—  
It makes one's heart to yearn and  
eyes grow dim  
To think of saving just one soul  
for him.

—Selected.

## The Text Explained

### How the Early Disciples Won Others to Christ

(John 1: 40-45)

*One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.* The occasion for John's speaking (this was John the Baptist) was the appearance of Jesus. "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! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed 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? 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." (John 1: 35-39.)

One of these two disciples of John

was Andrew, and he is identified as Simon Peter's brother. John's record of the gospel was written many years after the events of this chapter took place; and since Simon Peter was so widely known at the time that John wrote, it was but natural that he should identify the lesser known brother in his relationship to the one who was better known, namely, Peter. Although Andrew lived in the shadow of his illustrious brother, he has the distinction of being the first person who brought another one to Christ.

*He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ).* The frequent parenthetical statements which are found in John's writing were necessary in order to make intelligible Jewish expressions which would not be understood by Gentile readers near the close of the first century, A. D. The "Messiah" of the Hebrew is the "Christ" of the Greek and the

"Anointed" of the English. The pious Jews of the time of this lesson were looking for the coming of the one who would be Messiah. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ." (Luke 3: 15.)

S. D. Gordon calls this one of the famous personal work chapters of the New Testament. There are, as the reader can see, three "findeths" in it. Andrew findeth his own brother, Jesus findeth Philip, and Philip, in turn, findeth Nathanael. John, the companion of Andrew and the one who wrote the narrative, may also have found his brother James. If that is true, then it would be as natural for him to omit that fact, as it was that he should omit his own name. John's statement that Andrew "findeth first his own brother Simon" could imply that John also found his brother; although the statement may simply mean that the first thing which Andrew did after finding Jesus was to find his brother and bring him to the Messiah.

*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).* This, apparently, was the introduction of Jesus and Simon to each other, and if it was, the words of Christ to the latter must have made a deep impression upon him. Simon evidently knew his temperamental nature, and to have the one who was represented to him as being the Messiah to tell him that he would in time be called Cephas (Hebrew) or Peter (Greek) must have caused him to wonder greatly. This, of course, was literally fulfilled; for Simon did become as firm and steadfast in his moral and spiritual behaviour as the proverbial rock. The principal lesson which we should learn from this is that the way for one to become better is to endeavor to get the best out of himself. That is what happened in the case of Peter—the latent possibilities were within him, and were like seed which had been planted, but which had never been watered, and, consequently, had never grown.

*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, the city of Andrew and Peter. If Andrew has the distinction of being the first to bring a prospective disciple to Jesus, then Philip is the first one to receive a direct request from the Lord to follow him. The events of this lesson thus far considered took place "in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing" (John 1: 28), which was probably across the Jordan from the lower part of Galilee. (See map.) Jesus and all of the disciples who had up to this time come to him were from Galilee, where Jesus was then minded to go. Bethsaida was probably a suburb of Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the sea of Galilee.*

*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.* How instinctive and natural it is for one who has found the Christ to tell some one else, and especially those whom he knows, about him. No one told Andrew and Philip to go out, seek others, and bring them to Christ; and yet as soon as they realized that they had found the Messiah, they shared with others their conviction. That is always the case of those who really realize the meaning of finding the Christ. Some one has suggested that even a dog that has had its leg mended will bring other limping dogs to the person who was kind to it. And it is certainly true that whoever really believes anything will be a propagandist for it. This is true of the world, and it is even more true of those who have been genuinely converted to Christ. (Read the history of the early church, as set forth in the Book of Acts.)

### A Natural Consequence

(Prov. 11: 30)

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that is wise winneth souls.* The rendering of this passage in the King James Version is somewhat different from that just quoted. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." There may not be a great deal of difference in the meaning of the two renderings, but they are capable of making a difference, unless one is

very careful. For example, in the King James Version the idea which one is likely to get is that there is a certain credit laid to a man's account for winning souls, that is, a man who wins souls is demonstrating the part of wisdom. There is, of course, a certain amount of truth in that, but hardly the thought which *one* gets from the American Standard Version.

The rendering of the passage, according to the version which is used as a basis for these studies, is in keeping with the well-known use of "parallelism" so often found in Hebrew poetry, of which the present passage is an example. In the case of the text now before us, the two parts are similarly constructed, and set forth a similar lesson. The *effect* of a righteous life on others is like that of a tree of life; and the *result* which flows from a life of wisdom is the winning of souls. In the well-known metaphors of Jesus, Christians are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (See Matt. 5: 13-16.) The *result* of letting one's light shine is that others will be led to glorify the heavenly Father, although the one who lets his light shine may make no direct effort to influence the one who glorifies God as the result of the good example of the follower of Christ. (Cf. 1 Pet. 3: 1, 2.) The wise man is the one who does the will of God. (Matt. 7: 24, 25), and the example of his faithful obedience is certain to have its effect in the lives of others, whether he actually is aware of it or not. (Cf. 1 Cor. 9: 19-22; James 3: 13-18.)

But there is also the positive side of this question, too. The "wise" man is also in the best position to win souls. The wisdom which such a person has is of the heart, and not merely that which he received from the schools. The Hebrew word for "win" is translated by that term *one* time in the Old Testament, but it is rendered "to take" nearly eight hundred times. It reminds us of what Jesus said to Simon after he and his companions had "taken" the great draught of fishes, "And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." (*take*

*alive*, margin.) (See Luke 5: 1-11.) The experienced fisherman knows how to take fish alive, and in like manner the wise man understands how to win souls.

### The Glorious Reward

(Dan. 12: 2, 3; James 5: 19, 20)

*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* Although this passage has been made to refer to the "resurrection" of Israel from Babylonian captivity and other similar experiences, it is also made to apply to the last day, that is, the judgment day; and it appears that the latter is probably the thought which the prophet had in mind. At least we know that Jesus described the final resurrection at the end of the world in practically the same manner. "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment," that is, condemnation. (John 5: 28, 29.)

*And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.* As already pointed out, the wise are those who do the will of God, and this is the sense in which Daniel used the term. "Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand." (Dan. 12: 10.) The wise are those who "instruct many" (Dan. 11: 33), and who turn many to righteousness, both by their example and their teaching; and they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. "O glorious thought!"

*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.* Those who carefully read the Book of James will probably see little logical connection between the last two verses, the one just quoted, and the rest

of the epistle. If, as some Bible students think, the entire epistle is but the report of a sermon which James preached, and which was put into tract form and sent to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion, then the last two verses were probably intended to emphasize the great work of winning souls to Christ.

But whatever may be the status of the letter itself, James does present the great joy of soul-saving. It is the joy of the shepherd who finds the lost sheep, and gently brings it home again; the joy of the father who awaits the return of the prodigal son; the joy of the angels of heaven

over one soul who repents. This is the joy which any Christian who genuinely loves the Lord and the souls of men may experience; but this involves sympathy for the lost and the erring. Paul expresses the same idea in these words: "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.) The soul-winner covers a multitude of sins when he leads the sinner to the Saviour who forgives them.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

What was the over-all mission of Christ into the world?  
Quote some passages of scripture which show this to be true.  
What is God's attitude toward the lost?  
How do you know this?  
Into whose hands is the work of soul-saving committed? Give reasons for your answer.  
What is the Divine plan for saving the lost?

#### The Golden Text

Where is the emphasis placed on the question of salvation, so far as people are concerned?  
Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text spoken?  
How should all Christians feel about the matter of soul-saving?

#### How the Early Disciples Won Others to Christ

Under what circumstances did the first disciples come to Jesus?  
Why is Andrew spoken of as Simon Peter's brother?  
What distinction does Andrew enjoy?  
Why does John's gospel contain so many parenthetical statements?  
What words are used to designate the office of Jesus?  
Discuss the first chapter of John from the standpoint of personal work?  
Why is so little personal work done by the church today?

Discuss the introduction of Jesus and Simon to each other.  
What do the names which were applied to Simon mean?  
Discuss the change which later came over Simon which justified the Lord's prediction.  
What is the most effective method of making people better than they are?  
What distinction does Philip enjoy?  
Give the story of Philip's bringing Nathanael to Jesus.  
Why did Andrew and Philip want to bring others to Jesus?

#### A Natural Consequence

Compare the rendering of Prov. 11: 30 in the King James and the American Standard versions.  
What is the lesson of this passage?  
In what sense is the righteous a tree of life?  
How is it that the wise win souls?  
Discuss this work from the standpoint of one's influence, and from the standpoint of his deliberate efforts.  
What is the real meaning of winning souls?

#### The Glorious Reward

About what is Daniel speaking in verse 2?  
How did Jesus express the same matter?  
What is the meaning of "wise" in this passage?  
How can such people turn many to righteousness?  
What is said regarding the reward in Dan 1: 3?  
What does James say about soul saving?  
How does one convert a sinner from the error of his way?  
How can such a person cover a multitude of sins?

Lesson XIV—December 31, 1961

## HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Lesson Text  
2 Pet. 3: 8-14: Rev. 21:1-4

8 But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 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.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy living and godliness,

12 Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give dili-

gence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Je-ru-sa-lem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God:

4 And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"We shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is."* (1 John 3: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 3: 1-3.

### Daily Bible Readings

- December 25. M.....Christ the First Fruits of the Tomb (Matt. 28: 1-10)
- December 26. T.....The Christian's Hope (John 14: 1-6)
- December 27. W.....Hope in Christ (Col. 1: 24-29)
- December 28. T.....Faith Overcoming Doubt (John 20: 11-18)
- December 29. F.....Triumph Over Death (1 Cor. 15: 50-58)
- December 30. S.....Christian's Inheritance (Psalm 23: 1-6.)
- December 31. S.....At Home With the Lord (2 Cor. 5: 1-10)

TIME.—Second Peter, probably about A.D. 65; Revelation, A.D. 95-97.

PLACES.—Second Peter, not known; Revelation, probably Patmos.

PERSONS.—Peter and those to whom he wrote; John and the seven churches in Asia.

### Introduction

Hope and the *future* are words which express ideas about which every normal and responsible person is interested. In the words of Victor Hugo,

Hope, child, tomorrow and tomorrow still,

And every morrow hope; trust while you live.

Hope, each time the dawn doth heaven fill,

Be there to ask as God is there to give.

Paul says, "For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with

patience wait for it." (Rom. 8: 24, 25.) And again, "We may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. 6: 18b-20.)

Hope therefore, in its very nature, always looks toward the future; and, insofar as the Christian is concerned, the future toward which he looks is both in this life and the life which is to come. The future in heaven

will not be his to enjoy, unless he looks forward to and makes the best use he can of the future of his life here upon the earth. Jesus told his disciples just before he left them to return to the Father that he would be with them all the days of their life here upon the earth; and would be ready to receive them when they reached the other side. (See Matt. 28: 20; John 14: 1-3.) These and similar promises which the Lord made to his people constitute the only ground for hope which exists.

When people think of the future, and especially their hope for a future life in the world to come, they nearly always have in mind its eternal duration; but what many people fail to realize is that they cannot have a life of eternal *duration* in heaven, unless

they have a life of eternal *quality* in this world. A life which can be destroyed cannot last for ever. "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, *even eternal destruction* from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believe (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1: 7-10.) The reason the "saints" are not destroyed is that they have an eternal quality of life. (Cf. Col. 3: 1-4; John 5: 24.)

### The Golden Text

"We shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. The full context of this passage is as follows: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3: 1-3.)

John wants all Christians to know what a glorious thing it is for them to be children of God now, but the future of the believer is even more wonderful than his present. It is wholly beyond the ability of any human being to comprehend the glory which shall be his when he is finally made into the complete likeness of Christ. All those who are redeemed in Christ are made into new creatures (2 Cor. 5: 17), but their transformation into his complete likeness will not be finished until they shall see him even as he is. In becoming a Christian, one is made a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4), and he must continue to grow into the divine likeness the rest of his life here upon the earth. (See 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) This is what John means when he says, "And every one that

hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Beginning with this knowledge which has been vouchsafed to all believers—"We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is"—we can turn to the Lord's own transfiguration for a glimpse of that which we may expect when he comes. Peter, one of the three disciples who were privileged to be present on that occasion, refers to that which happened as the Lord's "majesty;" and Luke describes the scene in these words, "And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling." (Luke 9: 29; cf. 2 Pet. 1: 16-18.) It is probably not amiss to think of the transfiguration of Jesus as a "preview" of his glory when he comes again; and it will be in that day that his faithful disciples shall be glorified together with him.

Face to face with Christ my Saviour,

Face to face—what will it be,  
When with rapture I behold him,  
Jesus Christ who died for me?  
Only faintly now I see him,  
With the darkling veil between;  
But a blessed day is coming,  
When his glory shall be seen.  
Face to face shall I behold him,  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face, in all his glory,  
I shall see him by and by.

## The Text Explained

### God's Apparent Delay, An Opportunity for Repentance

(2 Pet. 3: 8-10)

*But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* The preceding words of the chapter from which this portion of our lesson is taken should be read. "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3: 1-7.)

The section of the lesson now under consideration is Peter's reply to the scoffers referred to in the quotation just made, so far as the time element is concerned. The apostle wants his readers to remember that God does not count time as men do. With him there are no long and short periods; it is all an *eternal now*. And so, whatever he does about the fulfilling of his promises will be for his glory and in the best interest of all concerned. "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." (Verse 15.) The apparent delay of the Lord has, indeed, meant the salvation of many; for had the world been destroyed while they were in their sins, they would have been lost eternally. This fact should cause every sinner today to seek the Lord at once.

*The Lord is not slack concerning*

*his promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* This is a continuation of the apostle's reply to the contention of the mockers. They, in effect, had said that if the Lord had made a promise to destroy the earth, he had not kept it; but Peter wants Christians to know that any seeming delay in the execution of that promise is not due to tardiness on the part of God. There is a divine motive behind the apparent failure to act, namely, it is not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (Cf. Rom. 2: 4.)

*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* The *Expositor's Greek Testament* notes that no distinction is made between the "day of the Lord" and the "coming of Christ," and that this fact is remarkable, as excluding any idea of millenarian teaching, which speedily made its appearance in the early church. (Cf. 1 Thess. 5: 2; 2 Thess. 2: 1-3.) Peter is saying that that day will surprise those who are clinging to the idea that no change is possible.

This is the inspired description of the manner in which the earth shall be destroyed. It is, of course, impossible for human beings to conceive the full meaning of that terrible destruction, but the words of Adam Clarke may help us to get a better idea of what will take place when the fire and the watery particles in the atmosphere are brought together. "Put a drop of water on an anvil, place over it a piece of iron red hot, strike the iron with a hammer on the part above the drop of water, and the report will be as loud as a musket; when, then, the whole strength of those opposite agents is brought together into a state of conflict, the noise, the *thunderings*, the *innumerable explosions*, (till every particle of water on the earth and in the atmosphere is, by the action of the fire, reduced into its component gaseous parts,) will be *frequent, loud, confounding, and terrific*, be-

yond every comprehension but that of God himself." This will be the "great noise" of verse 10.

Clarke then goes on to say that when the fire has conquered and decomposed the water, the latter's elements, hydrogen and oxygen gases, the former highly inflammable and the latter an eminent supporter of all combustion, will occupy distinct regions of the atmosphere, hydrogen by its very great levity ascending to the top, while the oxygen from its superior specific gravity will keep upon or near the surface of the earth; "and thus, if different substances be once ignited, the fire, which is supported in this case, not only by the oxygen which is one of the constituents of atmospheric air, but also by a great additional quantity of oxygen obtained from the decomposition of all aqueous vapors, will rapidly seize on all other substances, on all terrestrial particles, and the whole frame of nature will be necessarily torn in pieces, *and thus the earth and its works will be burned up.*" Either this or a similar situation will mark the end of the material earth. We are not told specifically how the great conflagration will be started, whether by a direct act of God himself, or by some means which he permits.

### A Life in Keeping with Hope

(2 Pet. 3: 11-14)

*Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?* Inasmuch as there is no question about the coming of the great and terrible day, so far as Christians are concerned, the only question which should be uppermost in their minds is, What shall we do about it? The answer is found in the type of lives they should live, and the attitude they should manifest. Notwithstanding the awfulness of the day, it will be one of rejoicing for those who are ready to meet the Lord in peace; and they are exhorted to look for and earnestly desire (hasten, margin) the coming of that day. Trench and others think

that Christians can cause "the day of the Lord to come more quickly by helping to fulfil those conditions without which it cannot come; that day being no day inexorably fixed, but the arrival of which it is free to the church to hasten on by faith and prayer." If this is true, then that helps to explain why no one but God knows when that day will be. (Cf. Matt. 24: 36.)

But *according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* Bible students are not agreed on the significance of this passage. It is the opinion of some that in destroying the earth, it will not be annihilated, but cleaned of its dross and evil, and made into a dwelling place for the righteous. Others think that it will be completely destroyed (cf. Rev. 20: 11) and that only heaven, the eternal dwelling-place of God will remain. At any rate, only the righteous will be there.

*Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.* The very fact that the Lord's people expect these things to come to pass demands a life of faithfulness on their part. "And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (Cf. Eph. 5: 25-27; James 1: 27.)

### The New Heaven and the New Earth

(Rev. 21: 1-4)

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven, and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.* The final judgment and the eternal doom of the wicked are graphically portrayed in the closing verses of chapter 20, which should be read just here; and now the apostle John turns to a description of the final abode of the righteous. Both the third chapter of Second Peter and the twentieth chapter of Revelation tell of the destruction of the present order, the heaven and the earth; and now John sees the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. All that which is said in this and the following chapter should be looked upon as setting forth the strongest possible motive for faithful

living on the part of the Lord's people.

"*And the sea is no more.*" There are many things about the sea which even the most informed do not understand; and we may not know just what John meant by the statement just quoted. However, there are three characteristics which are very suggestive, and it could be that they were in his mind. (1) *Mystery*. Much of the sea is still unfathomed and unknown. (2) *Treachery*. The beauty of the sea entices many to venture out upon its bosom, but every sailor is aware of its treachery which is often beyond description. Oliver Wendell Holmes said that you can domesticate mountains, but the sea is wild and untamed. (3) *Separation*. This may have been the principal thought in the mind of the aged John when he penned these words; for it was the sea which stood between him and his beloved brethren on the mainland.

*And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.* The human race had its beginning in a garden, but when the redeemed reach their

final home it will be in a city, "whose builder and maker is God." Jerusalem had long been the capital city of the Lord's people, and now the *new Jerusalem* will be theirs for ever. The city is called "holy," probably in contrast with the corrupt Babylon of the wicked. A bride makes her very best preparation when she goes to meet her husband-to-be; and that is what the Lord expects of his people when they are ready to join him for eternity.

*And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away.* This is one of the most complete and soul-satisfying statements which could be made to mortal beings about their future happiness. Not only will they not be separated from God but his tenderness will be manifested to them in every conceivable way.

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

Why are so many people interested in the ideas suggested by "hope" and "future"?  
Quote and discuss some of the Bible teaching regarding "hope."  
How are "hope" and the "future" related?  
What assurances did Jesus give his disciples regarding these questions?  
What do people usually have in mind when they think of the future life?  
What does the New Testament teach regarding this subject?

### The Golden Text

Discuss the full context of this passage.  
What was John seeking to emphasize when he wrote these words?  
What glorious hope do people have when this earthly life ends?  
In what way may we have a "preview" of the glory which shall be revealed?

### God's Apparent Delay,

#### An Opportunity for Repentance

Under what circumstances did Peter begin this section of our lesson?  
Why was it necessary to reply to the scoffers?  
In what way does God regard time?  
How does his apparent delay result in the salvation of others?

Why say that the Lord is not slack regarding his promise?  
What motive does Peter say is behind the seeming delay?  
How do men come to repentance?  
What is meant by the "day of the Lord"?  
Does the New Testament provide for a millennial reign before the end of the world? Give reasons for your answer.  
What effect will the destruction of the world have on the wicked?  
In what way does Peter describe the final day?  
Why with a "great noise"?  
In what way will the elements be dissolved?  
How can fire conquer and decompose water?  
What, then, will characterize the burning of the material earth?  
How will this great conflagration get started? Give reason for your answer.

### A Life in Keeping with Hope

What should be the Christian's greatest concern regarding the final day?  
What should be their attitude toward the end of the world?  
How may they "hasten" the coming of that great day?  
Why isn't more of this done by the Lord's people?  
What promise do we have regarding the future dwelling place?  
In what sense will righteousness characterize it?

What will every faithful Christian do about these things?

**The New Heaven and the New Earth**

How is this portion of the lesson related to the preceding chapter of Revelation?

What is the purpose of John's words regarding the heavenly home?

What is suggested by the expression "and the sea is no more"?

What was John's vision regarding the new order of things?

Why a "city," rather than a "garden"?

What does John say about the Lord's people when they enter the city?

What effect should all these things have on the Lord's people now?