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

Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON
UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS
FOR THE
CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1969

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PREFACE

The church of the Lord is authorized by the Lord to do any and everything which is essential in the accomplishment of that which God has ordained for his people. The church is the *body of Christ*, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Many Bible students regard the term "fulness," as used here, as indicating the fact that the church is the complement of Christ, or, which is the same thing, that which makes him complete, in just about the same sense that a wife makes her husband complete.

If that which has just been said is true, then the work of the church is but an extension of the ministry of Christ. Or, to state the same thing in another way, Christ came to the earth, accomplished the will of his heavenly Father in making possible the salvation of the human race, and then went back to God, established the church and assigned her the work of bringing the lost to him.

When the chronology of the life of Christ, as given by the writers of the gospel narratives, is duly considered, it appears that Jesus, on the very day of his ascension, said to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16: 15.)

It appears that Matthew's version of the Lord's commission to his disciples was spoken a short time after his resurrection from the dead, at which time he said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 18-20.)

The three great areas in which the church is to function, in carrying out the orders of her Lord, are (1) build up the church itself, or, which is the same thing, see to it that everything is done which is essential to an acceptance by the Lord; (2) carry the message of salvation to those outside the church, by whatever legitimate means is at hand; and (3) minister to the needs of all men, in so far as possible, and especially those who are of the household of the faith. (See Gal. 6: 10.) It is, of course, easy to see that teaching is involved in all three of these areas, and it is also easy to see that the major part of the work of teaching, so far as the church itself is concerned, is done through its class work and pulpit activities; and it is the purpose of this annual to assist those teachers and students who are in their adulthood.

This is the forty-eighth annual volume which the Gospel Advocate Company has published for use by churches of Christ; and it is the twenty-fourth volume 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 shall make use of it throughout the year.

THE AUTHOR.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSONS FOR 1969

FIRST QUARTER

John the Baptist, Christ's Harbinger.....	Lesson I—January 5	Matt. 3: 1-6; John 1: 19-23
Mary, the Mother of Jesus.....	Lesson II—January 12	Isa. 7: 14; Matt. 1: 18-25; Luke 2: 48-50
John, Beloved of the Lord.....	Lesson III—January 19	Matt. 4: 21, 22; John 13: 21-26; 19: 26, 27; 21: 24, 25
Peter, the Impulsive Apostle.....	Lesson IV—January 26	John 1: 40-42; Matt. 14: 27-31; John 21: 5-7
Mary and Martha, Special Friends of Jesus.....	Lesson V—February 2	Luke 10: 38-42; Mark 14: 3-9
Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles.....	Lesson VI—February 9	Acts 22: 3-10; Phil. 3: 7-14
Barnabas, the Exhorter.....	Lesson VII—February 16	Acts 4: 36, 37; 11: 22-26; 13: 1-3
Dorcas, Who Loved the Poor.....	Lesson VIII—February 23	Acts 9: 32-42
Stephen, the First Martyr.....	Lesson IX—March 2	Acts 6: 8-15; 7: 54-60
Timothy, a Good Minister.....	Lesson X—March 9	Acts 16: 1-3; 2 Tim. 1: 1-6; Phil. 2: 19-22
Luke, the Beloved Physician.....	Lesson XI—March 16	Luke 1: 1-4; Acts 1: 1; Col. 4: 14-17; 2 Tim. 4: 11
Lydia, a Business Woman.....	Lesson XII—March 23	Acts 16: 11-15, 35-40
Philip, a Successful Evangelist.....	Lesson XIII—March 30	Acts 8: 4-13, 26-31

SECOND QUARTER

Rebellion in Israel.....	Lesson I—April 6	1 Sam. 8: 4-9, 19-22
Saul, Israel's First King.....	Lesson II—April 13	1 Sam. 9: 15-21; 13: 1-4
Samuel's Solemn Address.....	Lesson III—April 20	1 Sam. 12: 1-5, 13-25
Saul Disobeys and Is Rejected.....	Lesson IV—April 27	1 Sam. 15: 10-23
David, Israel's Second King.....	Lesson V—May 4	1 Sam. 16: 1-12
David and Goliath.....	Lesson VI—May 11	1 Sam. 17: 19, 23, 24, 32, 41-52
Saul's Anger Toward David.....	Lesson VII—May 18	1 Sam. 18: 5-16
David and Jonathan.....	Lesson VIII—May 25	1 Sam 19: 1-7; 20: 12-17
David Shows Mercy to Saul.....	Lesson IX—June 1	1 Sam. 26: 5-12, 17, 21
David, King Over Israel and Judah.....	Lesson X—June 8	2 Sam. 2: 1-7; 5: 1-5
David's Great Sin.....	Lesson XI—June 15	Sam. 12: 1-10, 13
Solomon, Israel's Third King.....	Lesson XII—June 22	1 Kings 1: 22-35
Solomon's Sin and Fall.....	Lesson XIII—June 29	1 Kings 11: 4-13

THIRD QUARTER

Lesson I—July 6

Our Creator—God.....Gen. 1: 1-5, 26-31; 2: 1-3

The Deity of Christ.....Lesson II—July 13.....John 1: 1-14

The Ministry of the Holy SpiritLesson III—July 20.....John 16: 13, 14; Acts 2: 1-4; Rom. 8: 26, 27; Gal. 5: 22-26

The Inspiration of the Scriptures.....Lesson IV—July 27.....Gal. 1: 11, 12; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17; 1 Cor. 2: 11-13

The Fall of Man.....Lesson V—August 3.....Gen. 3: 1-6, 16-24

The Grace of God.....Lesson VI—August 10.....2 Cor. 12: 9; Eph. 2: 1-9; Tit. 2: 11-14

Obedying God.....Lesson VII—August 17.....Matt. 7: 21-27; John 14: 21-24; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9

The Plan of Salvation.....Lesson VIII—August 24.....Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 37, 38; Rom. 6: 1-6; 10: 9, 10

A Case of Conversion.....Lesson IX—August 31.....Acts 8: 26-40

Identifying the Church.....Lesson X—September 7.....Matt. 16: 18; Rom. 16: 16; Eph. 1: 22, 23; 4: 4-6; 5: 25-27

Acceptable Worship.....Lesson XI—September 14.....John 4: 1-7, 19-26

The Christian Graces.....Lesson XII—September 21.....2 Pet. 1: 1-12

Soul Winners for Jesus.....Lesson XIII—September 28.....John 1: 40-45; Prov. 11: 30; Dan. 12: 2, 3; James 5: 19, 20

FOURTH QUARTER

Lesson I—October 5

The Work of the Church.....Matt. 28: 18-20; Eph. 4: 11-16; James 1: 27; 1 Tim. 5: 16

The Lord's Supper.....Lesson II—October 12.....Matt. 26: 26-29; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29; Acts 20: 7

The Contribution.....Lesson III—October 19.....1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; 2 Cor. 8: 1-8; 9: 6-8

Prayer.....Lesson IV—October 26.....Matt. 7: 7-11; James 1: 5-7; 1 Thess. 5: 16-18

Growth through Study.....Lesson V—November 2.....Col. 2: 6; 2 Tim. 3: 14, 15; Eph. 6: 10-18

Acceptable Praise in Worship.Lesson VI—November 9
Matt. 26: 30; Eph. 5: 18-20; Col. 3: 16, 17; Heb. 2: 11, 12;
Amos 6: 1-5

Christian Fellowship.....Lesson VII—November 16.....Acts 2: 42-45; Phil. 1: 3-7; 1 John 3: 16-18

Doing Good unto All Men.....November VIII—November 23.....Luke 10: 30-37; Gal. 6: 1-10

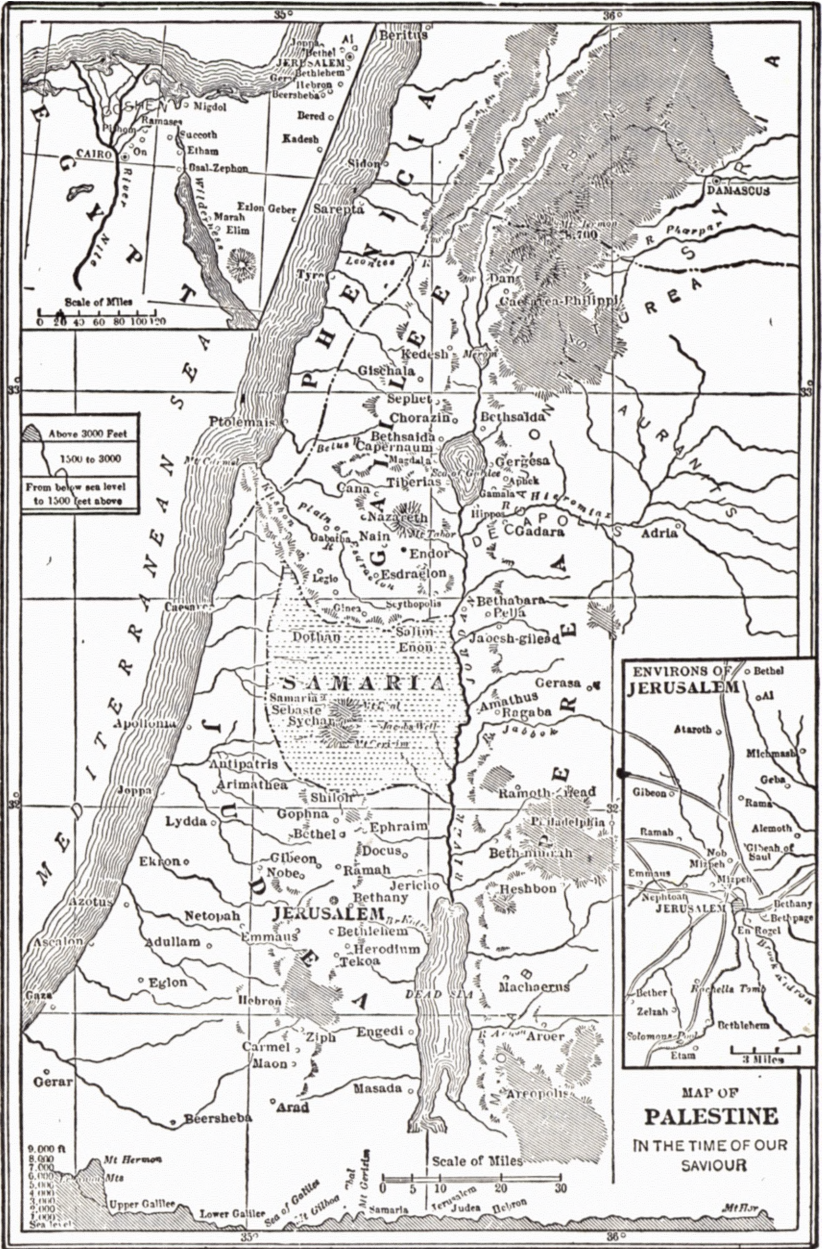
The Way to Peace in the World.....Lesson IX—November 30.....Isa. 2: 2-4; Acts 17: 22-28; John 4: 20, 21

Respecting Civil Authority.....Lesson X—December 7.....Mark 12: 13-17; Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Pet. 2: 13-16

Following Christ in the Business World.....Lesson XI—December 14.....Eph. 6: 5-9; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19; Matt. 7: 1-5

Meeting Temptation.....Lesson XII—December 21.....2 Cor. 6: 17, 18; Eph. 5: 11-18; 1 John 2: 15-17

Hope for the Future.....Lesson XIII—December 28.....1 John 2: 25; 2 Cor. 5: 1-10



FIRST QUARTER GREAT MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

AIM.—To consider carefully the devotion to truth, the faithfulness and fidelity of great men and women mentioned in the New Testament, and to derive from their noble examples inspiration, encouragement and hope in our efforts to live the Christian life.

Lesson I—January 5, 1969

JOHN THE BAPTIST, CHRIST'S HARBINGER

Lesson Text

Matt. 3: 1-6; John 1: 19-23

1 And in those days cometh John the Bap'-tist, preaching in the wilderness of Ju-dae'-a, saying,

2 Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of through I-sa-iah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord,

Make his paths straight.

4 Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out unto him Je-ru'-sa-lem, and all Ju-dae'-a, and all the region round about the Jordan;

6 And they were baptized of him

in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

19 And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Je-ru'-sa-lem priests and Le'-vites to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou E-li'-jah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No.

22 They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said I-sa'-iah the prophet.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John."* (John 1: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 1: 57-63.

Daily Bible Readings

December 30. M.....	John, a Wilderness Voice (Luke 3: 1-8)
December 31. T.....	John's Parents (Luke 1: 5-17)
January 1. W.....	The Birth of John (Luke 1: 57-66)
January 2. T.....	The Preaching of John (Matt. 3: 1-12)
January 3. F.....	Witness of John to Christ (John 1: 19-34)
January 4. S.....	Jesus Baptized by John (Matt. 3: 13-17)
January 5. S.....	Death of John the Baptist (Mark 6: 14-29)

TIME.—Probably about A.D. 27.

PLACES.—The wilderness of Judaea; Bethany beyond the Jordan.

PERSONS.—John the Baptist, the multitudes, some priests and Levites.

Introduction

John the Baptist occupied a unique place in the history of the Bible, as may be seen by reading

Luke 16: 16, namely, "The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom

of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it." The work of John the Baptist, although foretold in the Old Testament (cf. Isa. 40: 3f), was not authorized by the law of Moses; nor was it continued as a part of the kingdom of Christ. John's work therefore was a special work, which God authorized him to do; and it came, as it were, between the two dispensations of Moses and Christ. It appears that Jesus was saying, in the passage just quoted, that with the ministry of John, the old order was giving away, that is, was finishing its course, in preparation for the kingdom of Christ; but that men were impatient for the new order, and were trying to inter into it prematurely, that is, they were trying to get into the kingdom before it was established. But Jesus quickly added that "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall." (Luke 16: 17; cf. Matt. 5: 17-20.) Thus, as we can see, Jesus made it plain that John's ministry marked a change in history, but that in no way affected the beginning of one system, nor the fulfillment of the other.

That which has just been said is sufficient to show that some knowledge of the mission of John the Baptist, is essential to an understanding of the plan and purpose of the New Testament itself. The coming of Christ was the end toward which the law of Moses pointed (cf. Gal. 3: 24; Rom. 10: 4); but even that great event, that is, the coming of Christ, would not have the desired effect, without due preparation. The entire world, including God's chosen people, was so engrossed in sin, as to make at least a partial reformation essential, before any appreciable number of people would be willing to receive the Redeemer, whom God was sending to rescue men from eternal doom. John the Baptist therefore had the unique task of showing the people of the old dispensation how they could pass successfully into the new. But, as is usually the case in such matters, it appears that relatively few were wise enough to heed the

harbinger's admonition, and remain faithful to that which he urged them to do.

It seems clear from Luke 1: 24-26 that John the Baptist was approximately six months older than Jesus; and it is for this reason that the dates in the lives of both men are given in the same year. And inasmuch as the chronology of the Bible, insofar as our practical use of it is concerned, is reckoned from the birth of Jesus, a few words regarding that question is not out of point at this place in our study. Students who use various commentaries, and other reference works, will notice that different dates are given for the birth of Jesus; and this, of course, is confusing, until the matter is better understood. The dates which are preferred by most modern Bible students are those from 7 to 4 B.C. But if the dates are reckoned from the birth of Jesus, why is it that the actual date of his birth is not specified? The following quotation from *The Concise Bible Dictionary*, included in some editions of the *American Standard Version* of the Bible, the version from which the lesson texts of this commentary are taken, is a brief, but satisfactory, explanation of the question now before us.

"Chronology of the New Testament. The date of the birth of Jesus Christ, the central event in the world's history, was first fixed, in the sixth century A.D., by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman monk, in the year 753 after the building of Rome (A. U. C., *Anno urbis conditoe*). That this was not the exact year of our Lord's birth has been abundantly provided; but the use of the date all over Christendom is too firmly established to be changed. It is certain from St. Matthew that our Lord was born before the death of Herod the Great (spring of 750 A. U. C.). The Nativity can scarcely be placed later than the autumn of 759 A. U. C. (B. C. 5-4). For the date December 25, there is no direct evidence whatever." (Page 26.) This same authority also suggests A. D. 27. as the date for John's ministry. (Op. cit.)

The Golden Text

"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John." The

passage which serves as the golden text for today's lesson should be

read in the light of its context, namely, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light." (John 1: 1-8.)

The passage just quoted is the first part of John's Introduction to his Gospel Narrative; and, as one may see, it is the first time that the inspired writer reaches the realm of history, as he records his account of the life and works of Jesus. The five verses which precede the one which serves as the golden text are concerned with the Word, about whom John was to bear witness. There are two interesting things to note in the writer's reference to John, namely, (1) his divine mission, and (2) the fact that he calls him simply John. That John the Baptist was sent from God is a mat-

ter, both of prophecy and history, as may be seen by reading such passages as Mark 1: 2-4; Malachi 3: 1; John 1: 31-34. The probable reason why the writer of the Book of John never refers to John as *John the Baptist*, was due to the fact that his own name was also John; and he therefore wrote as if the Baptist was the only *John* who was entitled to distinction.

When John bore witness of Jesus, he set before the people the principal facts regarding his identity, the purpose of his coming to the earth, and the need for them to prepare themselves for his reception. It is interesting to note that the conditions of salvation which John proclaimed were identical, insofar as the major steps were concerned, with those which were later authorized by Jesus. The testimony which John presented was calculated to produce faith, and both repentance and baptism were unto the remission of sins; but it should be observed that they were not, as they later, were, authorized in the name of Christ. (Cf. Acts 2: 38.) The reason why the faith, repentance, and baptism, which John preached, were unto the remission of sins, was because they were all ordained of God for that purpose. (Read again John 1: 7; Mark 1: 4.)

The Text Explained

The Harbinger and His Message

(Matt. 3: 1-3)

And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord,

Make his paths straight.

If one speaks only of Matthew's narrative, beginning with this section of the lesson text, and ending with the Lord's temptation, he will be dealing with that which may very properly be regarded as a kind of prelude to the public ministry of Jesus. The time referred to—"in those days"—is indefinite, so far as Matthew is concerned; but if one

reads the third chapter of Luke, and especially verses 1-6, he will see that the time of John's appearance to the public was both definite and well known. Matthew's use of the expression we are now considering, is in the sense of that general period; and if we will remember that Matthew wrote his record many years after the events of this lesson took place, it will not be difficult for us to understand his phraseology. By referring to Luke 3: 23, it will be seen that some twenty-eight years intervened between the second and third chapters of Matthew. Jesus was about two years old when he was taken to Nazareth by his parents. (Read the second chapters in both Matthew and Luke, for the full account of the childhood of Jesus.)

It appears that the greater part of John's preaching was done in the open and rural areas of Palestine;

but it is certain that he experienced no difficulty in getting large audiences to hear his messages. The term "wilderness" is not used in the sense of complete barrenness, but rather of an unpopulated and unappropriated territory, which afforded free range of shepherds and their flocks. It will be remembered that Moses kept the flocks of Jethro in the wilderness of Midian. (See Ex. 3: 1; Acts 7: 29, 30.) It had been approximately four hundred years since a prophet of God had spoken to Israel; and inasmuch as the people were in great expectation (cf. Luke 3: 15-17), they were anxious to hear any one who claimed to have a divine commission.

John was referred to as *the Baptist*, because of the peculiar work which he did, being, as he was, the first person in recorded history to administer the rite of baptism, as that term is generally understood, by the authority of God. If one will take the time, and make the effort, to investigate, he will soon see that the "washings," which were authorized by Moses, were not "baptisms," which were administered by others for the benefit of those who were being washed. (Cf. 2 Kings 5: 10, 14.)

The dominant message of John was the call to repentance. He had come to prepare a people for the reception of Christ; and a change in the attitudes and lives of his auditors was essential to that preparation. The basic meaning of the term "repent" is to change one's mind, to have another mind, to think differently. Repentance is not forsaking sin; that is the fruit of repentance. It is, rather, to have another mind regarding sin, to think differently about it, to reconsider. It implies a true knowledge of sin, a conviction of sin, with its guilt, condemnation, and terrible consequences. It means that the sinner changes his thoughts regarding sin, and his attitude toward it. Repentance is produced by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7: 10), and results in a reformation of life (Matt. 3: 8).

It is interesting to observe that John the Baptist is referred to as a "voice" crying in the wilderness. This implies that his personality was thrown, as it were, into the shadow of Christ. (Cf. John 3: 22-

30.) Someone has asked, "What would be the duty of a purely human teacher, of the highest moral and spiritual aim, entrusted with a message for the benefit of mankind?" The answer can be found in the attitude and conduct of John the Baptist, namely, a teacher who represents himself as a mere "voice," crying aloud in the moral wilderness around him, and anxious beyond everything else, to shroud his own insignificant person beneath the majesty of his message. This is also the way that the apostle Paul felt about his ministry. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 1-5.)

John's Way of Life and the Response to His Preaching

(Matt. 3: 4-6)

Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

The appearance of John the Baptist must have made a deep impression upon the minds of the people who saw him, and heard him preach. We have no account of the details of his physical features, but it is not difficult for one to form a mental picture of the harbinger, as he proclaimed his message in the wilderness. The description which Hastings gives of him, in *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, should give us a general idea of the life and habits of this great man. "His hair was long and unkempt, and his features were tanned with the sun and the air of the desert. Probably they were thinned, too, by austerity; for his habitual food was of the simplest order, consisting only of locusts and wild honey. Locusts, dried and preserved, form still, at the present day, an article of food in the East, but only among the very poor; people in the least degree luxurious or scrupulous would not look at it. Wild honey, formed by hives of bees in the crevices of rocks or in rifted trees, abounds in the desert-places of Palestine, and may be gathered by any one who wanders there.

"The raiment of the Baptist corre-

sponded to his food, consisting of a garment of the very coarsest and cheapest cloth, made of camel's hair. The girdle of the Oriental is an article of clothing on which a great deal of taste and expense is laid out, being frequently of fine material and gay coloring, with the added adornment of elaborate needlework; but the girdle with which John's garment was confined was no more than a rough band of leather. Everything, in short, about his external appearance denoted one who had reduced the claims of the body to the lowest possible terms, that he might devote himself entirely to the life of the spirit."

Thus, it is easy to see that John's personal habits were entirely consistent with the work which he came to do. Nothing could have been more appropriate in the preacher of repentance, than that he should set an example of austere self-denial.

John's remarkable appearance, his manner of living and the ringing message, which he knew to be supported by divine authority, made a profound impression upon the people who heard him. In saying that "all" the people in the regions named went out to hear John, we are not to understand that every single individual was included; for we are specifically told that there were some of the Jewish people who rejected John's offer of the blessings which he promised through his message. (See Matt. 21: 23-26; Luke 7: 29, 30.) But some have estimated that, all in all, a million people may have heard John preach.

Inasmuch as John's baptism was for the remission of sins (Mark 1: 4), it was altogether proper that it be preceded by a confession of sins. A confession, that is, an admission of guilt, of sins is essential to repentance, which John also demanded; for no one will repent of a sin, which he does not acknowledge or admit. (Cf. 1 John 1: 8, 9; Acts 8: 20-24.) It behooves every one therefore to keep his conscience alive in this respect; and always be the first to admit his sins and shortcomings.

Everything which we are told about John the Baptist is unique. The ascetic nature of his life in the wilderness, the startling message

with which he broke the prophetic silence of four hundred years, the incorruptible sincerity of his humility, out of which no allurements could bribe him, the fearless honesty of his words, and the tragic horror of his death—all combine to give him a peculiar and a distinctive place in the Sacred History. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and his dress and manner of living are not the only things which remind us of that great prophet of Israel; but even Elijah did not have the privilege of preparing the way for the coming Messiah.

John the Baptist, as we have already seen, stood between the Jewish and Christian dispensations. There was much which connected him with both, but he did not belong exclusively to either. He had more knowledge of the nature of the person and work of the Christ, than any of his predecessors among the prophets; and yet the smallest in the kingdom of Christ is greater than John was. (Matt. 11: 11.) In fact, according to the Lord's evaluation of him, John was as great, if not greater, than all the peoples of the earth, up to that time. And with that view of John greatness, coupled with the fact that it would be exceeded by even the least in the kingdom of Christ, how great must membership in that kingdom be! The Old Testament closes with these ringing words regarding John: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mai. 4: 5, 6; cf. Matt. 17: 9-13.)

John's Disclaimer and Affirmation

(John 1: 19-23)

And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that

sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet.

John's record of the gospel was written long after the other three accounts; and it was no doubt for this reason, in part at least, that John passed over many of the things which are mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, such as the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. These events, like many others which are mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels, were already well known; and John, apparently, followed a different style in his overall report, and included much information which is not found in the other three records. This is particularly true of the Introduction (John 1:1-18); and it is easy for one to see that the section of the lesson text which we are now considering is actually the beginning of John's history of the life and teaching of Jesus.

The term "Jews," used by John, usually refers to the ruling class, in the case now before us, probably the Sanhedrin. The scribes and Levites were charged, among other things, with teaching the people (cf. Neh. 8: 9); and it was probably for that reason that they were sent by the Supreme Court of the Jews, to get some information regarding John. The emissaries asked John a series of questions, which received negative answers. He denied that he was the Christ (cf. John 3: 22-30); Elijah (Matt. 11: 11-14); or the prophet (Deut. 18: 15-19; Acts 3:

22, 23). The Jews probably understood that the literal Old Testament Elijah was due to return to the earth; and it was apparently this that John was denying. And, too, John may not have known that he was the "Elijah" who was referred to. But when the messengers continued to press John for an answer as to his identity, he answered them by stating his true mission, namely, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet."

Isaiah's statement, from which John's reply was taken, is found in Isaiah 40: 3-5, and should be read at this time. It was apparently fashioned after a well known practice among Oriental monarchs. It was their custom, when they were about to travel through any part of their dominion, to send heralds before them to announce their coming, and to see that the highways over which they were to pass were in order. Any obstacle which might be in the way had to be removed, and all rough places had to be made smooth. And if no highway existed in that part of the country, then one would have to be made, even if it required the filling up of valleys and other low places, and the cutting down of mountains and hills. All of this was a striking illustration of the levelling influence which John the Baptist came to exert; and if one is a careful reader of the New Testament, he will see that the same principle is to be followed by gospel preachers today. (Cf. 2 Tim. 4: 1-5.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Why can it be said that John the Baptist occupies a unique place in Bible history?

What was John's relationship to the dispensations of Moses and Christ?

What were some people trying to do with reference to the kingdom of the Lord?

Why couldn't they succeed?

Why is it important that we learn some facts regarding John the Baptist and his mission?

How do Bible students go about determining the birth dates of John the Baptist and Jesus?

The Golden Text

Discuss the setting of the golden text for today's lesson.

What two things does the inspired writer record with reference to the man about whom we are studying today?

What possible reason did he have for not calling him John the Baptist?

How did John go about giving his testimony of Jesus?

What do we learn regarding the conditions of the salvation which John proclaimed?

The Harbinger and His Message

In what setting are the first two sections of the lesson text for today found?

What did Matthew mean by the expression, "in those days"?

How much time elapsed between the second and third chapters of Matthew? Give reasons for your answer.

In what kind of a situation did John do the greater part, if not all, of his preaching?

Why did such great throngs of people go out to hear him?
 Why is the man of our lesson today called John the Baptist?
 What was the dominant message of John's preaching and why was that necessary?
 What is the meaning of repentance, how is it brought about and what is its result?
 How did John refer to himself with reference to his work?

John's Way of Life and the Response to His Preaching

What kind of an impression must John have made upon the minds of the people who saw him?
 Why did he evidently dress and eat as he did?
 In what way was a life of that kind related to his preaching?
 What did Matthew mean by saying that "all" the people of certain areas went out to John?

How do we know that some of the people rejected his preaching?
 Why did the people who were baptized confess their sins?
 In what way are the confession of sins and repentance related?
 What can be said about the uniqueness of John the Baptist?
 What estimate did Jesus give of him?

John's Disclaimer and Affirmation

In what way is the Gospel of John different from the other three records?
 What possible reason did John probably have for not referring to the births of John and Jesus?
 Who visited John and what questions did they ask him?
 How did John reply to their questions and why?
 What did the Baptist tell them about his identity and mission?
 What was the prophecy of Isaiah to which he referred?

Lesson II—January 12, 1969

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

Lesson Text

Isa. 7: 14; Matt. 1: 18-25; Luke 2: 48-50

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Im-man'-u-el.

18 Now the birth of Je'-sus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JE'-SUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was

spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Im-man'-u-el;

which is, being interpreted, God with us.

24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife;

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JE'-SUS.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God."* (Luke 1: 30.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 12: 46-50.

Daily Bible Readings

January 6. M..... Mary and the Angel (Luke 1: 26-38)
 January 7. T..... Mary's Betrothal (Matt. 1: 18-23)

January 8. W.....	Mary and Elisabeth (Luke 1: 39-56)
January 9. T.....	Mary, the Mother of Jesus (Luke 2: 18-21)
January 10. F.....	Mary and the Boy Jesus (Luke 2: 41-52)
January 11. S.....	Mary at the Cross (John 19: 23-27)
January 12. S.....	Mary Continues in Prayer (Acts 1: 8-14)

TIME.—From 7-4 B.C.

PLACES.—Nazareth and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—An angel, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

Introduction

The many legends which have grown up around Mary, the mother of Jesus, have all but hidden her true self from our view. But if we are willing to read the New Testament record, for which it says, it will not take us long to discover that the traits of her character, which have been preserved for us, are relative few in number. And if we compare her portrait with that of Jesus, it will not be difficult to see that hers "is but a dim shadow, flitting across the page from a moment here and there, and then fading away into total obscurity." If we should try to evaluate the personality of Mary, it is almost certain that we could do no better than Christina G. Rossetti has done in the following poem:

"Whereto shall we liken this Blessed
 Mary Virgin,
 Fruitful shoot from Jesse's root graciously
 emerging?
 Lily you might call her, but Christ
 alone is white;
 Rose delicious, but that Jesus is the
 one Delight;
 Flower of women, but her firstborn
 is mankind's one flower:
 He, the Sun, lights up all moons
 thro' their radiant hour.
 "Blessed among women, highly favored,"
 thus

Glorious Gabriel hailed her, teaching
 words to us:
 Whom devoutly copying we too cry,
 "All Hail!"
 Echoing on the music of glorious
 Gabriel."

In her book, *Women of the Bible*, Metta N. Thomas says, "Of all the portraits in the Bible, there is none more beautiful or impressive than that of Mary, the mother of our Lord. The artist mixed his colors for this portrait as though he were going to paint not one, but many blossoms of a delicate and flower-like purity, which distinguishes her and makes her the queen of women. What we chiefly feel, as we gaze at this portrait, is the vital force of purity. The artist draws this characteristic out as he would paint a lovely Madonna lily. There are also other impressions we get that sink into our souls. She is a type of the violet with its modesty, of the little fragrant spice pink for pure love, and of the heliotrope for tenderness. A refreshing, lasting fragrance clings to her down through the ages, and,
 "Like a vase in which the roses
 have once been distill'd—
 You may break, you may shatter the
 vase if you will,
 But the scent of those roses will
 cling to it still.' "

The Golden Text

"*And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.*" The words just quoted are found in the midst of a conversation which took place between the angel Gabriel and Mary. "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her,

and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind that manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God." (Luke 1: 26-30.)

The words which Gabriel spoke to Mary came to her as a complete surprise. There is every reason for believing that she was a good woman; for otherwise she would

not have found favor with the Lord. Or to express the same thing in another way, she was the kind of a woman which God could use in his service. This should be a lesson to all of us; for no one ever knows when God can use him in his service, providentially speaking, if he (or she) is the kind of person who will fit into his plans and purposes. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28.) There is no indication that Mary doubted the words which Gabriel spoke to her; she simply did not understand them, and her questions were evidently intended to seek further information, as may be seen by reading the remainder of the paragraph from which the words of the golden text are taken. It appears that Mary's attitude was the exact opposite of that which was manifested by Zacharias, when Gabriel spoke to him. (See Luke 1: 8-23.) When the angel had explained the matter to Mary, her response was, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

When one looks at the question from the ordinary reckonings of the world, he may well ask, What kind of favor was it that Mary received? And when the matter is duly considered, it is doubtful if many of the people of this day would want to claim it. It would not be long be-

fore she would set out on a long and wearisome journey, not because she wanted to go; but because a foreign king commanded it. Her destination would be the little town of Bethlehem, and while there she would bring forth her firstborn son; but there would be no room for either of them in the place where guests were accustomed to lodge. Instead, her baby was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger. And then, after Bethlehem, she, her husband, and her baby, were put to the necessity of going into Egypt, in order to escape the wrath of a wicked king. After it was safe for them to return to the land of their people, they again found it unsafe to dwell in the part of the country where the child had been born; but were told to return to Nazareth, where they lived, until her son left home to be about his Father's business. And finally, with a sword in her heart, she was compelled to watch her son die on a cross; because her own people were determined that he could live among them no longer. But God sustained her in all of her troubles, and she doubtless came to understand that she was but having a part in the "divine program" of God, all because she had found favor in his sight.

The Text Explained

The Prophecy of Isaiah

(Isa. 7: 14)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The preceding verses of the chapter from which the words of the golden text for today are taken should be read at this point; and if that is done, it will be seen that the kings of Syria and Israel were plotting the destruction of the king of Judah, who was Ahaz. When Ahaz heard of the plot against him and his people, "his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind." It was then that Jehovah told Isaiah to take his son, and go and meet Ahaz, and say to him, "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, be-

cause of these two tails of smoking firebrands."

Isaiah was then told to make it plain to Ahaz that the plot of his enemies would not succeed; but that Israel, instead, would be destroyed. Then the prophet warned Ahaz of his need for faith in that which had been told him. After that, this statement: "And Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask of thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7: 10-14.)

The prophecy just quoted was

spoken some seven centuries before the birth of Christ, and it was one of the many inspired utterances regarding his coming. Many of the prophecies which were Messianic in their nature, had a twofold application, that is, they referred to persons and things in that age of the world, and they later found a fuller and more complete fulfillment with reference to Christ and his kingdom. This is particularly true of prophecies which were fulfilled in both David and Christ. The principle will be considered further in the next section of the lesson text. But before leaving this section of the lesson text, it should be noted that when the Lord spoke of matters which were fulfilled within a relatively short time, that should give those who listen to his word confidence in the fulfillment of other predictions in the far distant future.

The Entrance of Jesus Christ into Human History

(Matt: 1: 18-25)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this came to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Immanuel;

which is, being interpreted, God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS.

One of the first things which students of the Bible should learn is with reference to the elliptical nature of the gospel records. Seldom does one learn all the facts about a given subject from any one of the four biographical writers. And so, in the case now before us, the entire account of the angel's visit, during which time Mary learned that she was to become the mother of Jesus, along with her journey from Galilee to Judaea, where she remained three months with Elisabeth, who was to become the mother of John the Baptist, are passed over by Matthew in his account of the birth of Jesus. (See Luke 1: 26-56.) It is evident from Matthew's account that Joseph did not know of the angel's visit with, and his message to, Mary, when he discovered that she was pregnant. The expression "she was found with child of the Holy Spirit" is Matthew's explanation of the matter. (Cf. Luke 1: 34, 35.)

A betrothal, that is, an engagement or contract to marry, among the Jews was a valid marriage; and the only way it could be broken was by death or a divorce. Therefore, when Joseph discovered that his intended wife was to become a mother, he was greatly disturbed, and felt that he would have to divorce her. He could not, being a righteous man, condone her supposed unfaithfulness; and, being a merciful man, he did not want to make a public example of her. A public exposure of adultery would have subjected Mary to the death penalty (Deut. 22: 23, 24); but a simple divorce would permit Joseph to put her away privily (Deut. 24: 1). Both his own reputation, and that of Mary, were at stake; and Joseph sought to protect both of them, to the extent of his ability. With that in mind, he wanted to act justly, with reference to his own; and mercifully, with reference to Mary's. That is a wonderful trait of character, and should be imitated by every one today.

It should be noted, however, that Joseph did not act with reference to Mary from mere impulse; he paused, and used his reasoning powers, in an effort to determine the right course to pursue; and it was then that divine aid was given to him. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13; James 1:

5-8.) The angel addressed Joseph as the son of David, perhaps to awake in him the heroic mood, and to remind him that he belonged to the family of God. That title confirms the view that Matthew's genealogy is that of Joseph; and he was thereby, as already suggested, summoned to a supreme act of faith, similar to those which were performed by David, and other great heroes of the Bible, who by their faith made their lives sublime. It is fair to assume that Mary had offered to Joseph an explanation of her condition, by relating the message of the angel; but it is also fair to assume that Joseph would regard such an explanation as being incredible. But here the angel confirmed Mary's story; and Joseph was urged to accept her as his chaste wife. While such visible visits by angels are no longer possible, we should remember that there are experiences in the lives of people while, appearing to be incredible, are, nevertheless, "stranger than fiction."

When the angel appeared to Joseph, he revealed to him three things about the birth of Jesus, namely, (1) it would be supernatural—"that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit"; (2) the son therefore would be both divine and human; and (3) his mission would be remedial—he "shall save his people from their sins." The name "Jesus" means *Salvation of Jehovah*, or *Jehovah is the Saviour*. Jesus, in the Greek, is the same as Joshua, in the Hebrew. (Cf. Heb. 4: 8.)

There is no salvation which does not depend upon a right relationship to God, and a right inward state, which results from that relationship; and this is what Jesus makes possible for the weary and longing soul. He delivers from every form of sin—from its guilt, its stain, its tyranny, and its awful power to shut us out from fellowship with God. No one has ever turned to Jesus for help, in the way in which he has directed, who did not receive the salvation which Christ came to offer. One aspect of his salvation is made possible here, and we can enjoy it in this life; but a part of it is yet to come, and it cannot be ours eternally until we have reached the other side. There is much to be

done before we are completely delivered from sin; but whether a present enjoyment, or a future heritage, everything which is rightly called salvation comes from Jesus, the son of Mary.

The message which the angel gave to Joseph was a command in the form of a prediction; an encouragement to enter into the plan of God for the redemption of the world. It was meant to help Joseph out of his doubts, and into a mood of heroic, resolute action. Instead of engaging in anxious thought, and brooding over that which he thought was a sinful situation, he was called upon to think of the child to be born as destined to be the Saviour of the world. Thus, the source of Joseph's distress became to him the greatest blessing he ever knew.

The words of the prophet which Matthew quotes are those which make up the first section of the lesson text for today; and the inspired writer makes it plain that the birth of Jesus would be in fulfillment of that prediction. *The Fourfold Gospel* notes that there are four ways in which the prophecies of the Bible were fulfilled, namely, (1) When something which is clearly predicted comes to pass. (2) When something which has been pictured in type and shadow is at last showed forth in substance and reality. (3) When an event which was described in language, more elevated and elaborate than the event demanded, is followed by another similar event to which the language is more perfected suited. (4) When parabolic and figurative language may be applied to some subsequent event.

The fulfillment of the prophecy now under consideration was evidently in the third of the senses just listed. All of the prediction which was made to Ahaz was fulfilled within a few years after it was spoken, except that which was said regarding a son's being born to the virgin. That part of the prophecy therefore was singled out and was, of course, reserved for a later fulfillment. If the people of Isaiah's day, and those of succeeding generations, had recognized this fact, and had continued to pass it on to their children, the people of the Saviour's day would have been in a better frame of mind and heart to accept

the account of his birth, as it was made known by divine revelation. (Cf. Luke 2: 8-20.)

It should be observed that Matthew, in quoting the prophecy from Isaiah, employs the definite article before the term "virgin." The article is also in the marginal note of Isaiah 7: 14. The demonstrative force of the article is entirely in place, inasmuch as it points, not merely to some virgin or another; but to a definite or specific virgin who would have that unparalleled distinction. That virgin was Mary, the mother of our Lord, and the woman about whom we are studying today. Her son, according to the prophecy now before us, was to be called *Immanuel*, which Matthew interprets to mean "God with us." (Cf. Matt. 28: 20.)

Joseph's action, following his dream, is nothing short of remarkable, when it is viewed in the light of his previous attitude toward Mary. (Read again verse 19.) Joseph had evidently refused to accept Mary's explanation regarding her pregnancy, for he was minded to divorce her; but after his encounter with the angel, he promptly proposed an immediate marriage. It should also be observed that Joseph offered the same type of evidence to justify his action, which Mary had evidently presented to him, namely that of the message of an angel. But this was a God-fearing couple, and Joseph clearly saw that they had the evidence which they needed to enable them to know that they were doing exactly as God would have them do; and they did not hesitate to obey him, when once they knew his will.

Matthew makes it clear that Joseph and Mary did not live together as man and wife *till* Jesus was born; but we also know from the record of his gospel that they did have their natural and normal relationship after that; for it is a matter of history that other children were born to them. (See Matt. 13: 55, 56.) The papal doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary is therefore entirely without scriptural foundation. Mary's son, in keeping with the instruction of the angel, was called JESUS, which was his personal name.

A Mother's Question and a Son's Reply

(Luke 2: 48-50)

And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

The passage just quoted is the closing part of that section in Luke's gospel record, which tells of the time when Jesus was lost by his parents, after their visit to Jerusalem, during the feast of the pass-over. After they had fulfilled their days there, they started with the caravan on the return trip to their home in Nazareth; and they went a day's journey, before they missed their son. Luke says that they supposed that he was among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: but when they failed to find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. "And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers." (See Luke 2: 41-47.)

Only a mother who has actually, or who has only apparently, lost a child can imagine the anguish which Mary suffered, during the anxious hours of the search for her young son. And when they finally found him, they did not rush to him, and put their arm about him; but, as Luke says, they were astonished. Joseph and Mary evidently stood in as much awe, in the presence of the renowned teachers, as peasants do in the presence of kings; and it was natural therefore for them to be astonished, when they saw their twelve-year old son talking freely with the learned rabbis, and even commanding their attention and respect. The question which Mary asked Jesus implies that they thought that he understood when they were to leave the city, and that he was expected to depart when they did.

In referring to Joseph as the "father" of Jesus, it should be remembered that he was only his *legal* father; and inasmuch as the true facts of his birth were not generally known, both Luke and Mary spoke of Joseph as being the father of Jesus. (Cf. Luke 3: 23.) Only

those who are not willing to consider all the facts in the case endeavor to use this incident against the truth of the virgin birth of Jesus. Incidentally, this is the last account we have of Joseph's being alive, so far as the record goes.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why is it difficult for us to have a clear vision of Mary's personality today?
Why is it not easy to evaluate her character?
When we do consider the facts in the case, what kind of an impression does Mary make?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did the angel address the words of the golden text to Mary?
What impression did the angel's message make on her and why?
What was her final reaction to the revelation which was made to her?
What was the nature of the favor which Mary found with God?
How does that favor compare with that which the world considers favor?

The Prophecy of Isaiah

Under what circumstances did Isaiah speak the words of this prophecy?
What was the Lord's reason for speaking to Ahaz as he did?
What was the nature of many of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament?

The Entrance of Jesus Christ into Human History

Why should all Bible students be acquainted with the elliptical nature of the gospel records?
Show that this is true with reference to the lesson now before us?

In what way was a betrothal regarded by the Jews at the time of this lesson?
Why did Joseph want to put Mary away privily instead of making her a public example?
How did he go about his effort to reach a proper conclusion with reference to Mary?
What important lesson should we learn from this?
How did the angel address Joseph and for what probable reason?
Is it reasonable to think that Mary offered no explanation to Joseph regarding her experience in the case? Give reason for your answer.
Why would Joseph be unwilling to accept such an explanation, if one was offered him?
What lesson should we learn from this?
What did the angel reveal to Joseph regarding the birth of Jesus?
What was the reason for calling the newly-born child *Jesus*?
What are the essential conditions of salvation?
What was the fundamental purpose of the angel's message to Joseph?
In what way was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled in the birth of Jesus?
Why did the Jewish people as a whole fail to recognize the fulfillment?
How did Joseph react to the angel's message to him?

A Mother's Question and a Son's Reply

What is the setting of this section of the lesson text?
What must have been the feeling of Mary when they failed to find Jesus?
What was their reaction when they did find him?
In what sense was Joseph the father of Jesus?

Lesson III—January 19, 1969

JOHN, BELOVED OF THE LORD

Lesson Text

Matt. 4: 21, 22; John 13: 21-26; 19: 26, 27; 21: 24, 25

21 And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zeb'e-dee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zeb'e-dee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

21 When Je'-sus had thus said, he was troubled in the spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 There was at the table reclining in Je'-sus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Je'-sus loved.

24 Si'-mon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh.

25 He leaning back, as he was, on Je'-sus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Je'-sus therefore answereth, He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him. So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Ju'-das, *the son* of Si'-mon Is-car'-i-ot.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.*” (1 John 4: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Luke 9: 28-36.

Daily Bible Readings

January 13. M.....	John's Call (Matt. 4: 18-22)
January 14. T.....	John, Beloved of the Lord (John 13: 21-30)
January 15. W.....	An Error of John (Luke 9: 49-56)
January 16. T.....	The Boldness of John (Acts 4: 13-22)
January 17. F.....	John at the Trial of Jesus (John 18: 15-18)
January 18. S.....	John at the Crucifixion (John 19: 25-27)
January 19. S.....	John on Patmos (Rev. 1: 1-10)

TIME.—A.D. 27-30.

PLACES.—Sea of Galilee; the upper room in Jerusalem; at the cross of Jesus; possible Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Jesus, John, and others.

Introduction

In his book, *The Apostle John*, W. H. Griffith Thomas notes that there are few things more interesting than the study of biography. “To trace a career from start to finish, to note the various features, circumstances, and crises, to discover the springs of character and the secret of power, to follow the course of a life from its opening to its close—all this is at once fascinating and profitable. It is probable that the vital interest of the New Testament is largely due to the fact that it is so definitely concerned with life, with human problems, needs, sins, weaknesses, conquests, blessings.” This author goes on to say that of all the lives which are recorded in Scripture, there are none more truly valuable than those of the apostles of Jesus. They were his closest associates, and he gave them exceptional opportunities of development and progress.

Two of the original twelve apostles whom Jesus selected are included in the list of characters

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*.

24 This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

25 And there are also many other things which Je'-sus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

which are to be studied during this quarter. They are John, the son of Zebedee, and Simon Peter. The only other apostle in the list for the quarter is Paul who, notwithstanding his own disclaimer (1 Cor. 15: 9), was one of the greatest servants of the Lord, whose names appear in the New Testament. John and Peter, along with James, the brother of Jesus, were looked upon as pillars in the church (Gal. 2: 9), and they were, of course, among the greatest of the great. No one can study the lives of these men without having a fuller knowledge of the cause of Christ, and without himself being made better as a result of his efforts.

There are many Bible students who think that John's mother was Salome, and that she was also the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus. And when we take into consideration some of the peculiarities of John as a writer, we may have some light on these questions. John

never mentioned his own name, nor that of the mother of Jesus, when he wrote his gospel record; and if Salome was the sister of Mary and the mother of John, it would be nothing but natural for him to omit any mention of those relationships. He does, however, mention the fact that the mother of Jesus was standing by the cross of her son, along with her

sister, and two other women, namely, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." (See John 19: 25.) It is hardly reasonable to think that Mary the wife of Clopas was the sister of the mother of Jesus; for if that were true, we would be confronted with the fact that each of the sisters was named "Mary."

The Golden Text

"God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." The context in which this passage is found may be described as the basis of Christian assurance. There is no greater manifestation of the love of God, than that which is seen in the scheme of human redemption. (Cf. John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8.) If the people of the world, and especially those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, would bring themselves to realize something of the meaning of God's love for them, they would experience a power in their lives, which would sustain them in all the trials and hardships incident to their lives. But in order for one to have this kind of assurance, he must be able to call to mind the fact, in his own experience, that he has indeed surrendered himself to God.

It is said of Luther, that he, in moments of extreme anguish of soul and tormenting doubt, would scrawl across his writing tablet, as a kind of defiance of the devil, these words "I *was* baptized," by which he evidently meant, "I did surrender myself to the Lord; and I am therefore his, and he is mine." If one is willing to accept that which the Bible says about God himself, along with his attitude toward his people (and he cannot please him if he does not, cf. Heb. 11: 6); and if he believes that God is good and only good, and that he is all-wise, ever-present, and has the power to bless beyond one's ability to ask or think, how can he doubt such inspired statements as

those found in Romans 8: 28 and Matthew 28: 20?

One of the greatest statements which was ever recorded regarding the love of God for his people, is found in the following quotation, which is the climax of Paul's remarks about the superior advantages of sonship in Christ, which are open to the believer: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;

We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that love 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: 31-39.)

The Text Explained

The Call to Discipleship

(Matt. 4: 21, 22)

And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in

the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

If one will take into account the chronology of the life of Christ, he will find that approximately one year elapsed between verses 11 and 12 of the fourth chapter of Matthew. Jesus apparently spent the greater part of that time in Jerusalem and Judaea, with an occasional journey to Galilee, as may be seen by reading the first four chapters of John. If John was the disciple who was with Andrew, when they went to see Jesus, following the testimony concerning him by the Baptist, then it is clear that John had known Jesus for about a year, when the time for this lesson arrived; and what was true of him was no doubt true of James and several others who were later called to be apostles.

The call of James and John followed the calling of two other brothers, Peter and Andrew, as may be seen by reading the previous verses of the paragraph from which this section of the lesson text is taken. Luke's version of this call is found in Luke 5: 1-11; and inasmuch as this is the fullest record in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mark 1: 16-20), it should be read at this time. It is clear from the first four chapters of John that some of the men who later became apostles followed Jesus occasionally at least; but it was at the time when the Lord was preparing to begin his great Galilean ministry, that they became his permanent followers, or, full-time workers with him in his ministry.

It is very probable that Jesus addressed the same words to James and John, which he had used in calling Peter and Andrew, namely, "Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men." This, as someone has expressed it, is a genial and dramatic metaphor, and, substituting "John" for "Peter," we may say, after Augustine, This fisherman did not lay aside his net; he only changed it. The four men who are mentioned in the context in the text, and the immediate context, witnessed the miraculous draught of fishes; and, as Luke expresses the matter, they were deeply impressed. "For he [that is, Simon Peter] was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee,

who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him." (Luke 5: 9-11.)

The term "catch," as the marginal note has it, literally means to *take alive*; and when the new occupation is considered in the light of their old one, it is easy to see the contrast between material things and the souls of men. Fish are caught to die, but men, to live; and we should be made to realize that the souls of men are vastly more valuable than any of the material things of this world. (Cf. Matt. 16: 24-26.) Looking at the three records together, that is, those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we have a picturesque account of Jesus among the everyday things of this life. And while he was in the midst of the nets and boats and the familiar occupations of the people of that area, the Son of God gave a new meaning, and imparted new power, to the lives of those humble fishermen; and what he did for them, he can, and will gladly do for us, if we are willing to listen to his word. Many of us have tarried too long by the shore, and it is therefore time for us to acknowledge the new Captain, and bid him command our lives, even as he commanded Peter's fishing vessel.

When Jesus came to the place where James and John were, the record says that they were "in the boat with Zebedee their father *mending* their nets." The original term for "mending" is *katartizō*, and its basic meaning is to put in order, to restore to its former condition, to put into proper condition, perfect. The word is frequently found in the New Testament. (See Matt. 21: 16; Luke 6: 40; 1 Cor. 1: 10; Gal. 6: 1;

1 Pet. 5: 10.) John, along with Peter and others, was a net-mender; and it is altogether possible that he often thought of that experience, when it was suggested or stated that God, too, is a net-mender, or, which is the same thing, that he will make those who put their trust in him what they ought to be. Peter's statement, in which he uses the term we are now considering, is as follows: "And the God of all grace, who

called you unto his glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect [restore, margin], establish, strengthen you." (1 Pet. 5: 10.)

Love and Responsibility

(John 13: 21-26; 19: 26, 27)

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in the spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh. He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus therefore answereth, He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him. So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

There was one disciple among the twelve who were our Lord's closest followers, whose name is not recorded in the Book of John; he is always referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Bible students, throughout the centuries of the Christian dispensation, have wrestled with this question; and they have, for all practical purposes, reached the unanimous conclusion that the disciple whom Jesus loved was none other than John the son of Zebedee. This is especially true of conservative students of the Bible; but it will have to be admitted that there are many modern scholars who question the conclusion just referred to. However, there is nothing strange about that; for there is hardly a book in the Bible, and certainly not a major point of doctrine contained therein, which has not come under their attack. William Barclay, in commenting on the identity of John, the son of Zebedee, and the disciple whom Jesus loved, says, after listing some of the characteristics of James and John,

"I believe that there is something to add to his story about this picture. As we have seen, John appears frequently in the story of the Synoptic Gospels, but never once does he appear by name in the Fourth Gospel. But in the Fourth

Gospel there appears a character who is called the Beloved Disciple. In ancient times no one doubted that the Beloved Disciple was John. (Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3, 1, 1; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6, 25, [footnote].) But in modern times the identification of the Beloved Disciple with John has been widely disputed." (*The Master's Men*, p. 31.) And then, to show the extremes to which some of these modern exegetes go, Dr. Barclay lists six possible identifications of the disciple whom Jesus loved. The first two are the following.

(1) "It has been suggested that the Beloved Disciple is not an actual historical person at all, but that he is an ideal figure, 'the exquisite creation of a devout imagination.'"

(2) "Strange as it may seem, the Beloved Disciple has been identified with Judas Iscariot. It is claimed that only Judas understood the mind of Jesus, and that the action of Judas was a deliberate aiding of Jesus to do the task which has been given him to do. There was, indeed, a Gnostic sect who had a gospel according to Judas, and who saw in Judas the ideal Gnostic who alone of all men understood Christ and had helped him to die. The identification of Judas and the Beloved Disciple is rendered impossible by the narrative of John 13: 21-30 where the two characters are obviously different." (Op. cit., p. 31f.)

The betrayal, trials, and crucifixion of Jesus were at hand, when the events of the first part of this section of the lesson text took place. The Lord and his disciples had taken their places back at the table, following his washing their feet, and a brief discourse on the meaning of his action. Jesus himself was troubled in spirit, and told his disciples that one of them was going to betray him. It appears that the disciples, on the whole, could not conceive of such a thing, and they began to doubt of whom he spoke.

The custom at that time was for those at the table to seat themselves on couches, arranged in a kind of circle or semicircle, around the table; and they would then lie over on their left elbow, which became a sort of prop for their body, and have their right hand free for handling the food which was on the table in

front of them. It appears that the one just in front, and a little below, the host or guest of honor, was said to lie in his bosom who, in this instance, appears to have been John. Simon Peter was some distance from John, and, realizing the closeness of the latter to Jesus, he "beckoneth," probably with a nod of his head, and requested that the beloved disciple ask Jesus regarding the identity of the traitor. John compiled with Peter's request, and was told that he was the one to whom the Lord would dip a morsel of the passover food, called a "sop." (*psōmion*, the diminutive of *psōmos*, which, in turn, is from *psaō*, to break into bits), or, a bit, morsel, or mouthful and give it to him. A dish, containing a liquid (cf. Ruth 2: 14) or some kind of sauce, was set on the table; and it is said that in the orient it was a token of intimacy to allow a guest to dip his sop in the common dish. We are not told whether or not John disclosed this information to the other disciples.

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.

If, as pointed out earlier in this lesson, John was the cousin of Jesus, and it appears that such is the view of conservative Bible students, generally speaking, then it was natural for Jesus to feel as he did toward his kinsman, viewing the matter from the human standpoint; but, and this is more important, John must have been attracted to Jesus because of his character and possibilities. This does not mean that John was an ideal character to begin with, any more than Peter was (cf. John 1: 42; Matt. 16: 18, 19); but Jesus understood human nature and knew, of course, what both men would do, when the opportunity was presented to them. This is also the principle upon which the Lord deals with all of us. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We now that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (1 John

3: 2.) This is also the lesson of the parable of the talents, namely, the Lord's people are rewarded, not for what they are at the moment; but for what they are capable of becoming.

It was therefore the natural thing for Jesus to commit the care of his mother to his beloved disciple John, rather than to trust her welfare in the hands of his half brothers who did not believe in him. (Cf. John 7: 5.) There is no evidence that Mary ever disbelieved in her son, whom she knew to be from God. It appears from the record that John was true to the trust which Jesus placed in him. A house near Ephesus is pointed out to the traveller in the lands of the Bible, as the house in which Mary lived during her later years, while John was living in that city; but there is no evidence, either for or against the idea that she went with John to the city of Ephesus, or that she actually lived there during the time of his sojourn in the principal city of Asia. But there is one thing of which we may be certain: that he never neglected Mary whose care had been entrusted to him. (Cf. 1 John 3: 13-18.)

The Testimony of an Eye-Witness

(John 21: 24, 25)

This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true.

As John neared the close of his record, he wrote of Peter's restoration, and of the latter's question regarding the future of the beloved disciple. The only thing that he wrote about that question was, "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John 21: 20-23.) Tradition has it that only John, of the apostles, was permitted to die a natural death.

John closed his record of his beloved Master in a kind of cadency. He did not attach his name to his document, but it was not because he was ashamed to. He rather wrote as an eye-witness who was known

and recognized for his truthfulness. That which he wrote was based upon his own knowledge, and not upon hear-say. The writer of the Book of John was among the first to meet Jesus, and he was a faithful disciple throughout the Lord's public ministry. The purpose which John had in writing is clearly stated in John 20: 30, 31. Instead of naming himself, John used the well known "editorial we," and he never called upon any one to believe that which he himself did not believe.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

This statement has been called

The Magnificent Hyperbole, and the thoughtful student needs no one to help him understand it, unless it is the definition of a hyperbole, which is an extravagant statement or figure of speech, not intended to be taken literally, but employed because of the effect it produces. On the other hand, in the words ascribed to Rabbi Mayir ben Isaac,

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the heavens of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above,
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretch'd from sky to sky.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

Why is the study of biography so interesting to so many people?

What makes the lives of the apostles such a valuable study?

What was the possible relationship of Jesus and John, from the physical point of view? Give reasons for your answer.

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did John write the words of this text and what is their value to us?

What is the greatest manifestation of God's love?

What will a realization of our relationship to God do for us in our daily living?

In what way does Paul deal with this question in his letter to the Roman brethren?

The Call to Discipleship

At what time in the ministry of Jesus was John called to be a full-time disciple?

Give reason for your answer.

Under what circumstances was he called?

What did the Lord propose to make of the men who became his followers?

What is the meaning and significance of "catch" as used by Jesus when he called them?

What lesson is there in this for us?

What lesson should we learn from the fact that the disciples were "net-menders"?

Love and Responsibility

In what way did the writer of the Book

of John refer to himself and who was that writer?

Why do some people question the theory that John wrote the record which bears his name?

What are some of the reasons given for thinking that the writer was some other person?

Under what circumstances did the first part of this section of the lesson text take place?

How were the disciples affected when Jesus told them of his coming betrayal?

What effort was made to ascertain the identity of the traitor?

In what way did Jesus respond to John request for that information?

What was the "sop" of which Jesus spoke?

What is the relationship between love and responsibility? Give reasons for your answer.

What was John the object of the Lord's special love?

Why does the Lord often show special love for unlovely people?

What kind of an impression should this make on us?

Why did Jesus commit the care of his mother to John rather than to one of her own children?

What reasons do we have for thinking that John was true to the responsibility which Jesus gave to him?

The Testimony of an Eye-Witness

In what way did John conclude his record of the life and teaching of Jesus?

Why, in your opinion, didn't he mention his name in the narrative?

With what figure of speech did the writer close his record and what is its purpose?

Lesson IV—January 26, 1969

PETER, THE IMPULSIVE APOSTLE

Lesson Text

John 1: 40-42; Matt. 14: 27-31; John 21: 5-7

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).

27 But straightway Je'-sus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters.

29 And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Je'-sus.

30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Je'-sus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.*” (John 21: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 16: 13-20.

Daily Bible Readings

January 20. M.....	Peter's Call (Mark 1: 14-18)
January 21. T.....	Peter Is Brought to Jesus (John 1: 35-42)
January 22. W.....	Peter, a Fisher of Men (Matt. 4: 18-22)
January 23. T.....	Peter's Tragic Fall (Luke 22: 54-62)
January 24. F.....	Peter's Confession and Restoration (John 21: 15-22)
January 25. S.	Peter's Great Pentecost Sermon (Acts 2: 22-41)
January 26. S.....	Peter Describes the Christian Life (1 Pet. 3: 1-18)

TIME.—A.D. 27-30.

PLACES.—Bethany beyond the Jordan, the sea of Galilee, and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Peter, and others.

Introduction

J. Oswald Sanders, in his book, *Robust in Faith*, discusses the characters of several individuals, whom he calls “Men from God's School”; and in summing up in a single sentence that which, in his opinion, best describes Peter, he refers to him as “the pebble that became a rock.” And he goes on to say that in no other Bible biography do we have such a wealth of detail of our Lord's training techniques with one who was to be an instrument in fulfilling

his world-purpose. The vivid personality of Peter, forth-right utterances, and deep devotion, along with the greatness of his strength, and the magnitude of his mistakes, make him an ideal test-case for the methods of Jesus. It is, of course, a well known fact that there is often a great contrast between God's ways and man's way (Isa. 55: 8, 9.)

Jehovah, as someone has noted, begins in secret. He calls an individual from the crowd, trains him

long and patiently, and finally makes him his partner, the center of a new unit, the channel through which he pours himself forth upon the world. And it was in keeping with this principle that the Lord chose for the leadership of the apostolic band the simple-hearted, impetuous, and lovable Peter. It is indeed significant that his name heads every list of the apostles, as given by New Testament writers. In speaking of his chief characteristics, J. Stuart Holden observes that "he neither understood the cost nor appreciated the necessity of cultivating the background in any situation. He was not the kind of flower that was born to blush unseen! Quick, impulsive, generous, impetuous—he was a man who must express his feelings; a man who, if he sees anything, must say so—must suit his actions to his perception. The logic of facts, once recognized, demanded immediate movement on Peter's part. Adjourments were no part of his make-up. He was 'quick on the trigger,' a man who

does things first and then thinks over them, sometimes sadly, later on. Such a man will make mistakes. But he'll make other things, too, that are not mistakes."

A. T. Robertson, in his book, *Epochs in the Life of Simon Peter*, has pointed out that there is a fascination for most of us in that disciple of the Lord, which justifies an earnest attempt to interpret his life and work. Peter's sheer humanity appeals to the average individual, and that makes such a person feel that he can understand Peter better than he can either John or Paul. Peter's very winsomeness drew Jesus to him at the very beginning of their acquaintance, as we shall see further on in this lesson; and that same characteristic won him friends at every turn. Peter has long since gone the way of all the earth, but he still lives in the pages of the inspired record, and in the hearts of thousands of believers; and he will still have no trouble in winning the heart of every person who, as time goes on, tries to understand him.

The Golden Text

"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." The words just quoted are taken from the incident in which Jesus succeeded in restoring Peter from his defection, prior to the crucifixion. The resurrection of Christ had already taken place, but the apostles had not been given new assignments, and, not wanting to be idle, seven of the apostles, headed by Peter, had gone fishing. The Lord appeared to them, and, coming ashore, they had breakfast with him. "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 to 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 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. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

It matters not how sorry our actions have been toward the Lord, he never ceases to love his people. (Jer. 31: 3.) The message just cited was spoken to the people of Israel, following their adulterous rebellion against Jehovah, and which resulted in their captivity; and if God loved them in that way, how much more does he love them who belong to Christ! (Cf. Rom. 5: 6-8; 8: 31-39.) Jesus warned Peter, just before the Lord's betrayal, that he and his fellow disciples were in grave danger; but he quickly assured Peter that he had prayed for him that his faith would not fail. (Luke 22: 31-34.) It appears, however, that Peter did not take the Lord's concern for him very seriously, and evidently did not feel any particular need for prayer on his behalf. But Jesus loved his temperamental 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 in his Lord's favor. It is in the context of the passage now before us that the ef-

fort at restoration actually took form.

Peter had boasted of his superior love for Christ (John 13: 36-38; Matt. 26: 31-35), but had signally failed to live up to his claim; and now Jesus, it appears, decided to test him on his own ground. The Lord, in the first two questions which he asked Simon, used the stronger word for love (*agapas*, second person singular, present indicative of *agapaō*), a love based on moral choice, and less impulsive

than the love (*philō*, first person singular, present indicative of *phileō*) which indicates natural affection or love based on sentiment. Peter, probably realizing his failure, used the weaker word for love in all of his replies. When Jesus questioned Simon the third time, he, too, used the weaker word for love, and that was what grieved Peter, and caused him to cry out, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

The Text Explained

The Day That Peter Met Jesus

(John 1: 40-42)

One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found that Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

If one will read the preceding part of the chapter from which this section of the lesson text is taken, he will see that John the Baptist had been bearing testimony regarding Jesus, and that two of his, that is, John's disciples, Andrew and presumably John the son of Zebedee, heard that which their teacher had said, and decided to follow Jesus. "And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou? 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." (See John 1: 35-39.)

Although Andrew was the first to find Jesus, and was the one who made it possible for Peter to know him, it is a historical fact that Andrew was compelled to live in the shadow of his illustrious brother the remainder of his life. But this did not detract anything from the true worth of Andrew; for he continued to serve in a noteworthy manner, as may be seen from the records of the gospel. (John 6: 8, 9; 12: 20-22.)

But we like to think of Andrew as the one who brought a man to Jesus, who became a living example of the way in which a person can rise from an unfavorable situation, to one of true greatness.

There are many people today who habitually wish that they were better than they are. For example, possessing a bad temper, they want a good one; timid, they want courage; or being sensual, they want emotional peace. And as they consider the situation, they often wonder where such things can be obtained. Such a viewpoint, however, is very erroneous; for no one can put such qualities into us from the outside. Those things which such people want are indeed very essential, if we are to live and enjoy the better life; but they are already in us, imprisoned and undeveloped, like seed which have never been watered, and so have never produced a harvest. Jesus said to Peter, "Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be . . . Peter," which is to say, You are unstable now, but you shall become as solid as the rock later on.

This should be sufficient to convince people that they should cease trying to be somebody else, or, which is the same thing, stop trying to import into themselves virtues from without. Instead, they should endeavor to be themselves, not necessarily as they are now; but as they are capable of becoming. Jesus says that he came that people may have life, and may have it abundantly. (John 10: 10.) It is never necessary for people to continue to live on a low level, or even on the level of someone else. The highway of life is littered with the

wreckage of people who have tried desperately to be somebody else. Fosdick notes that "here is a woman, for example, who in her girlhood dreamed of being a singer and, balked by circumstances, is now a clerk instead. To her daughter she transfers the thwarted ambition of her youth. Her daughter shall be the singer. Upon her daughter falls the mantle of her early hopes; yes, upon her daughter falls also the terrible hands of a devoted mother pressing a child into a mold so that the girl grows up trying desperately to be not herself but somebody else. Of course, the psychiatrist's offices are full, since so many parents do that kind of thing to their children and so many individuals do it to themselves.

"Be yourself. Never mind if somebody else is wiser, greater, more useful. That is not your affair. Be yourself—at your best. Especially if you are not a ten-talented person; having perhaps but one talent, dare to get out of yourself the best that is there."

If one really wants to get the best out of himself, here are some basic principles which he should steadfastly endeavor to follow namely, (1) *He should see to it that he possesses a deep religious faith.* It may not be very great at first, but it will gradually grow, if he will listen to God's word and act accordingly. (Rom. 10: 17; Luke 17: 5-10.) People who have a deep religious faith are convinced that their human life has a spiritual origin, a spiritual backing, and a spiritual destiny; and that things which are not seen are real and eternal. (See

2 Cor. 4: 16-18.) Equipped in this manner, and backed up such a philosophy, one is willing to face an unfriendly and difficult world, and make every effort to overcome whatever obstacles which may be in his way. (1 Cor. 10: 13; James 1: 2-8.)

(2) *A worthy ambition.* When Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a young man he wrote the following about himself: "The fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thoughts centers in it." Would the parents of young people today worry about the future of

their children, if they felt that way about pleasing God, that is, if they had the same kind of ambition to meet God's approval, the Longfellow had for success in the field of literature? (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 9; Heb. 12: 1, 2; Phil. 3: 7-11; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) Any person who has an ambition to do excellent work in any good field, and who is willing to be guided by Christian principles, is certain to get something out of this life, before he is through with it.

(3) *True friends.* Every successful person in this life needs friends, indeed, he must have genuine friends, the kind of friends who have faith in us, when we lose faith in ourselves; and who can discover our unsuspected possibilities, and unseal the hidden springs of life. (Cf. Mark 10: 21; John 1: 42.) Any one who reads the scriptures just cited knows that Jesus was a true friend both to the rich young ruler, and to Peter; and we ought to know that that is the kind of friendship which we, too, need. We frequently talk in the pulpit about the problem of believing in God, and the difficulty of believing in humanity; but there are many people who find it hard to believe in themselves. That was true of Peter, as may be seen by considering his experience with Jesus. (Cf., for example, Luke 5: 8, 10b; 22: 62.) "*Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be . . . Peter!*" Thus, we not only need friends who can see our possibilities, but who love us well enough to tell us the truth about ourselves.

When Faith Falters

(Matt. 14: 27-31)

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt.

Jesus had just fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes,

and had "constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away." (Matt. 14: 22.) And after doing that, he himself went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone. "But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a ghost; and they cried out for fear." (Verses 24-26.)

One of the first things which we should learn about this incident, is that the experience of the disciples on that occasion was not altogether unique; for Jesus often comes to us in a way which makes us dread, rather than welcome his approach. Sometimes he comes to us, for example, demanding that we give up certain pleasures or sins, which we do not want to give up; and he sometimes comes, asking for service which we do not want to render. (Cf. Matt. 25: 14-30; 28: 19, 20; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) The disciples, on the occasion of this lesson, were afraid when they first saw Jesus; but he calmed their fears, saying, "It is I; be not afraid"; and he will do the same thing for any mistaken soul, who is willing to listen to that which he has spoken in his revealed will. (Cf. Phil. 4: 6, 7; Rom. 8: 28; Heb. 13: 5, 6.)

We should be careful to observe the effect which the presence of Jesus had on Peter. His fears were replaced by faith; and that which before had seemed totally impossible, became a distinct reality. Christ always inspires such faith in the hearts of those who really know him. No one today, of course, can perform a miracle, as that term is commonly understood; but it is the firm teaching of the Scriptures, that Jesus always delights in a daring and romantic faith. There is not a single instance in the entire New Testament, which indicates that he was pleased with a prudent and conservative faith. (Cf. Matt. 9: 20-22; 2 Tim. 1: 12.) And so, instead of rejoicing in and encouraging such faith today, as that manifested by

the afflicted woman and the apostle Paul, we are often among the critics and those who discourage such action.

Peter's example, on the occasion of this lesson, is inspiring, even if his faith did falter and caused him to fail; he dared to undertake that which others were afraid or unwilling to do. One had better fail a thousand times, than to be afraid, or unwilling, to undertake anything. Why does such a step as Peter took look so foolish to us? Because of our mistaken view of it. In what had he been trusting to hold him up from a watery grave? Which is better, to trust a little boat, or the sure word of God? When Jesus said, "Come," Peter accepted the invitation; and so should we, regardless of what the situation may be. There are many things which we can accomplish, with the Lord's help; if we are willing to do our part. Peter failed to walk on the water, because he placed his mind on the difficulties, rather than on the Lord's promise; and what happened to him, can easily happen to us? One of the great tragedies of this age is that the average Christian walks by sight, rather than by faith. Our lives would be much richer, if we had more faith like that which was manifested by Peter. May we heed the Lord's invitation to come to him, whatever our condition may be; and he will supply our every need. (Cf. Phil. 4: 13, 19.)

Peter's Last Fishing Experience

(John 21: 5-7)

Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, 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. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. 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.

We learn from Luke 5: 1-11 that Peter was engaged in the fishing business, when Jesus called him to full-time discipleship; and now, as he is about to enter in upon another phase of his work for Christ, he is

again engaged in his old trade. Many Bible students have wondered why these seven disciples were fishing at the time of this lesson. We, of course, do not know; but it is reasonable to suppose that they were endeavoring to be busy, at a useful occupation, while waiting for further instruction from their Lord. Jesus had told them, on the night of his betrayal (Matt. 26: 32), that he would meet them in Galilee; and then, on the morning of his resurrection, the angel who announced it to the women who had gone to the tomb, sent word by them to his disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. (Matt. 28: 1-7.) All of that probably accounts for their being in Galilee at the time of this lesson.

Peter was soon to get his final lesson from the Lord, before his restoration as we have already observed; and now the miraculous draught of fishes would again impress upon his mind the truth which Jesus had spoken in Luke 5: 1-11, to the effect that he would become a fisher of men. And so Peter, in less than two months would stand before the great assembly in Jerusalem, on Pentecost, and win the hearts of many of the people to the Lord.

The unusual number of fishes which the disciples caught in their net, when they followed the direction of the man on the shore, must have caused them to take another look at him, especially the disciple whom Jesus loved; and when he did that, he recognized him as being their Lord. Those who are acquainted with the history of Peter and John will agree that Peter usually *acted* before John did; but that

John generally *understood* a given situation quicker than his more impetuous fellow-apostle did.

The impulsive Peter, who had stripped himself to his undergarment (see marginal note), acted in character, when he was made aware that the man on the shore, and who was talking with them, was indeed the Lord. He immediately cast himself into the water, in his eagerness to reach Jesus; and either waded or swam to the shore. We learn from the rest of the story that the boat was only about one hundred yards from the land, when Peter jumped overboard; but the others, with more restraint, came in the boat and dragged the net, which was "full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent."

Sanders notes that Lloyd Douglas is justified in calling his book, *The Big Fisherman*; for Peter was big in every way: and that goes for his defects, as well as for his virtues. The principal character in the first twelve chapters of Acts is Peter, just as Paul occupies that distinction in the remainder of the book. And it was to Peter that Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which means that it was his privilege to tell both Jews and Gentiles just how they could enter into that great institution. His sermons to representatives of both races are, in some measure at least, recorded in the second and tenth chapters of Acts, respectively; and what he said them is still the truth regarding that matter. Two of the New Testament epistles were written by Peter.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

Discuss the value of a study of the life and character of Peter for our day.
What were some of his chief characteristics?
What place does he usually occupy in the New Testament lists of the apostles, both in whole and in part?
Do you know of any exception to this rule? Give reason for your answer.
Why does the life of Peter appeal to so many Bible readers?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

Why does the Lord want to restore to his favor every person who goes astray?
In what way did Peter react to the Lord's warning to him?
How did Jesus go about restoring him?

The Day That Peter Met Jesus

Under what circumstances did Peter first meet Jesus?
What effect did Peter have on his brother Andrew?
For what is the latter chiefly noted?
How did Jesus assess the character of Peter when he first saw him?
What important lesson is there in this for us?
What should be the attitude of every person toward himself?
What mistake do many parents make with reference to their children?

What would be the better way for them to deal with their offspring?
 What three principles should every person seek to follow in building his character?
 Discuss each of them carefully.

When Faith Falters

In what way did the events of this section of the lesson text come about?
 How are the truths in it related to us?
 Why were the disciples in the boat filled with fear when they saw Jesus walking upon the water?
 What attitude do we often manifest toward the Lord today?
 What is the best way to overcome such an attitude?
 What lesson should we get from Peter's example on the occasion of this narrative?

Peter's Last Fishing Experience

What probable reason can you suggest for the disciples' fishing at the time of this lesson?
 What kind of work were Peter and his fellow-disciples about to begin?
 What benefit would this fishing experience probably give them?
 How did the fishermen come to recognize Jesus as he stood on the shore?
 What did Peter do when he learned the identity of the Lord?
 Why would any one think of Peter as the big fisherman?
 Discuss the work of Peter after he became a fisher of men?
 What books of the New Testament did he write?

Lesson V—February 2, 1969

MARY AND MARTHA, SPECIAL FRIENDS OF JESUS

Lesson Text

Luke 10: 38-42; Mark 14: 3-9

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

3 And while he was in Beth'-a-ny in the house of Si'-mon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment

of pure nard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head.

4 But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made?

5 For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred shillings, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 But Je'-sus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying.

9 And verily I say unto you, Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."*
 (John 11: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 11: 1-20.

Daily Bible Readings

- January 27. M.....Mary and Martha, Friends of Jesus (John 11: 1-6)
- January 28. T.....A Home of Hospitality (Luke 10: 38-42)
- January 29. W.....A Home of Grief (John 11: 17-21)
- January 30. T.....Faith of Mary and Martha (John 11: 22-29)

January 31. F..... Jesus Weeps with His Friends (John 11: 31-35)
 February 1. S..... Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11: 36-46)
 February 2. S..... Mary and Martha at Simon's Home (John 12: 1-8)

TIME.—A.D. 28-30.

PLACE.—Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Mary, Martha, and others.

Introduction

When we think of the life of Christ here upon the earth, we usually think of his active ministry, that is, as he went from place to place, teaching the people, working miracles, and doing many things which blessed humanity wherever he was at any given time. The activities just mentioned did occupy his time and efforts here among men; but that is not the whole story. There were also quiet hours in his life, when he had the opportunity to relax among his friends. It would be both a pleasant and profitable practice for one to go through the four gospel records, and endeavor to ascertain the different homes, in which Christ would most certainly find a warm welcome. There were, for example, the homes of Peter and Andrew, James and John, Matthew, Zacchaeus, Jairus, and the home where he turned the water into wine, to name only a few of them. But it is doubtful if there was a home in all the land of Palestine where Jesus enjoyed going more, and in which he found more to comfort his tired body, and sometimes troubled spirit, than in the home of Mary, Martha, and their brother Lazarus. And it is also most likely that there was no family in all the land which extended to the Lord a warmer welcome, and which enjoyed his visit more, than the two sisters and the brother who have just been named.

Mary and Martha are two of the better known women of the New Testament, and those who are acquainted with the facts which are recorded in the Scriptures concerning them love and admire them. Their home was in the little city of Bethany, some two miles from the capital city of Jerusalem. It appears that during the time of Jesus

here upon the earth, that the route which the people took from one of the cities to the other, was a footpath over the mount of Olives, which was also the route of the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a few days before his crucifixion. The modern village of Bethany is called el-'Azariyeh; and it is located on a motor road between Jerusalem and Jericho. There is nothing said in the New Testament regarding the financial circumstances of the family of Bethany, which we are now considering; but it is not difficult to get the impression that they, if not actually wealthy, were well off in this world's goods.

But whatever may have been their material standing, there is every reason for thinking that they lived a simple life, a life into which Jesus could enter, and feel perfectly at home. It is very probable that he visited these friends whenever he had the opportunity. The New Testament records three instances in which Jesus was with the family now under consideration, two of which we shall study in this lesson, while the other occasion was when he was called there because of the sickness and death of the brother. (John 11: 1-44.) There are some Bible students who endeavor to make the anointing of Jesus in Luke 7: 37-50 parallel with the anointing which took place in the second section of our lesson text for today; but there is no foundation in fact for such a viewpoint. The Simon of Luke 7 is not Simon the leper; and neither is there any indication that the Mary of this lesson was the sinful woman of Luke 7. The effort to identify the two Marys just referred to is seen especially in some Bible dictionaries.

The Golden Text

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." The words

just quoted are taken from the record of the visit to the home of Beth-

any, which is not otherwise a part of the lesson for today. The immediate context of the passage is as follows: "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. The sisters therefore sent unto him saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 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. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

The entire context of the golden text for today's lesson should be read; for it is in it that we have the closest view of the relationship which existed between Jesus and the family of Bethany. If we had only that which Luke records in his mention of them, we would not know how close the relationship was between them; that is, we would not know that it was characterized by a deep and abiding love. (Cf. John 11: 35, 36.) As one reads all the facts concerning Jesus and the family of Bethany, he is made to wonder why so signal a miracle as the raising of Lazarus from the dead is not mentioned by any of the writers but John. We have no direct information regarding the answer to this question, but it is probably correct to say that such a mention of the incident, at the time the Synop-

tic Gospels were written, might have been fatal to Lazarus, (cf. John 12: 1-11.) John's record of the gospel was written many years later than the other three; and it is altogether possible that Lazarus himself was either dead, or that any danger regarding his life had long since passed away.

The fact that Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus speaks volumes for them; for it is certain that he would not have loved them as he did, especially with the kind of love which is signified by Greek verb *agapao*, the greatest kind of love known to men, if their lives had not been governed by spiritual values. The Lord, of course, loved all men while he was here upon the earth, regardless of their moral character (cf. Rom. 5: 6-8; Tit. 2: 14); but that does not mean that he chose his closest friends and associates from the people who were steeped in sin. We can be certain that the family in Bethany, which we are considering at this time, rejoiced in the worship and service of God, and were certain that his lovingkindness was better than life itself. And so when Jesus would spend days of controversy with the secular-minded leaders of his people, it must have afforded him a great amount of genuine pleasure and satisfaction to be able to go at eventide to the home of those whose lives were governed by spiritual values, and where love and sympathetic understanding awaited him.

The Text Explained

A Glimpse At the Home Life of Mary and Martha

(Luke 10: 38-42)

Now as they went on their way, they entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary

hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

The lesson which we are considering at this time illustrates one of the rules of Bible study, which every student of the Scriptures should always remember, namely, that one portion of the Bible often supplements, or makes plain, other parts of the inspired record. That which has just been said is especially true of the four gospel narratives. For example, Luke does not mention the name of the village of Mary and Martha, nor does he say that they were the sisters of Lazarus; but when we turn to John, we are plainly given the information in both instances. We do not know

where Jesus was when he spoke the parable of the Good Samaritan; but if it immediately preceded the going to the house of Mary and Martha, he may have been on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, or not very far from it; for the text says, "Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house."

The manner in which Luke spoke of the two sisters in Bethany indicates that Martha was probably the older; and if that was true it would, of course, be natural for her to have the responsibility which usually goes with housekeeping. Jesus himself said that he had no place to lay his head (Luke 9: 58); and from that which we know of his earthly life, he never had a place which he could call his own. He lived in the home of Joseph and Mary, until he was about thirty years of age (cf. Luke 3: 23); and it appears that from that time onward, he had to depend upon the hospitality of his friends. Jesus did not therefore know from experience the comforts and conveniences which are usually found in the homes of those who are settled in their own houses. This, of course, should make us appreciate our homes more; and become more keenly aware of the meaning of hospitality.

That Jesus often longed for fellowship is clearly indicated by the fact that he frequently communed with his heavenly Father; and that he needed the quietness and peace which others generally find within their own homes, is clearly seen from the fact that he often retired to the solitude of the desert or the mountain, where he could be alone. It is safe to conclude therefore, from what we know of the relationship between Jesus and the family in Bethany, that he often found their home a haven of quiet and rest, when he sought refuge from the hardships which the Judæan ministry imposed upon him. The home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus was, as it were, a land-locked harbor, where one could find protection from the wild gusts of fierce passion and bitter malice which confronted Jesus, as he steered his course amid the angry billows and sunken rocks of the neighboring Jerusalem. In

Bethany there was always a home which offered a loving welcome and in it there were hearts with sincere affection, as the editor of *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible* so well expresses the matter.

And strange as it may seem, the original word for "sat," in verse 39, is found nowhere else in the New Testament. The term literally means "sat beside," and in the case now before us, the idea is that Mary sat beside the Lord's feet and went on hearing, that is, listening to his teaching. The ancient posture of a student was to sit at the feet of a teacher; and with the picture of both sisters before us, it is easy to see that Martha was honoring Jesus as a *guest*, while Mary honored him as a *teacher*. But Martha soon discovered that she had undertaken more than she could very well do alone. There is nothing to warrant the conclusion that she wanted Mary's place beside the Lord's feet; she simply wanted her sister to help her with that which she considered suitable entertainment for their guest. Lamar thinks that Martha must have felt that when the matter was brought to the Lord's attention, that he would immediately recognize that she was in the right about the need for additional help; and with that in mind, it appears that her words were a mild rebuke to Jesus for not seeing the situation sooner, and sending Mary on her way.

The original word for "cumbered" (verse 40) occurs only here in the New Testament. The marginal reading is *distracted*, which appears to be the precise meaning of the term. The word literally means, according to Vincent, "to draw from around," which suggests the idea that Martha's attention, instead of being centered *around Jesus*, was drawn hither and thither "about much serving." Vincent also points out that the aorist tense "did leave" indicates that Mary had been helping her sister, before she was drawn away by the presence of Jesus. The Greek word for "help" is *sunantilabētai* which, according to Robertson, is a double compound word, namely, *sun*, with; *anti*, at her end of the line; and *lambanomai*, middle voice of *lambanō*, to take hold. The whole expression may be expressed

in this way: Bid her "take hold and do her part along with me." The verse which we are considering is found only here and in Romans 8: 26.

The "many things" about which Martha was anxious and troubled apparently refer to the many things which she was trying to do for the comfort and pleasure of Jesus and her household. While the "one thing" which was needful could either mean one simple dish or meal, which would suffice for the occasion (so Robertson, Clarke, et al, cf. John 4: 34), or to the most important duty or privilege. The first of these views seems better suited to the context. It is not wrong to satisfy the needs of the physical man; but it is wrong to emphasize that to the neglect of the spiritual. Many women spend much more time and effort than is necessary in preparing a big Sunday dinner; and when that is done, there is little time left for, or interest in, the higher things of life. This, apparently, was the lesson which the Lord wanted Martha to see and understand; and it is still one of the lessons which are sorely needed today.

"The Economy of Love's Wastefulness"

(Mark 14: 3-5)

And while he was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head. But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made? For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred shillings, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

The incident mentioned in this section of the lesson text is also reported by Matthew (26: 6-13) and John 12: 1-8). It appears significant that neither Matthew nor Mark mention the name of either of the three members of the family of Bethany, the ones who had such a prominent part in the event we are now considering. This seems to confirm the observation, previously made, regarding the silence of the

earlier writers of the gospel records concerning the resurrection of Lazarus. It is also noticeable that both Matthew and Mark refer to the fact that the supper was given in the house of "Simon the leper," while John omits that fact altogether. We have no means of knowing who this Simon was, but he probably was a man whom Christ had healed of his leprosy.

We are likewise in the dark as to why the supper was held in Simon's house, rather than in the house of Martha, since she did the serving, and Lazarus was a guest of honor. There are some Bible students who think that Simon may have been Martha's husband, and it is possible that this was true; but we have no definite information on that question. It could have been that Simon wanted to furnish the house for the gathering, to show his gratitude for what Jesus had meant to him; and that the two families went together to honor Jesus. Martha, as in Luke's record, was still the one who was responsible for the food which was eaten, while Mary showed her personal devotion to the honored guest.

The deed which Mary performed on the occasion now before us has been described, as indicated by the title of this section of the lesson text, as "the economy of love's wastefulness"; and it must have helped Jesus bear the agony of the thorns which pierced his brow and the nails which were driven into his flesh. It should also be observed that that which gave splendor to her ministry was the fact that, apparently, it had no practical purpose. To others it seemed wasteful, extravagant, and unnecessary; but nothing which we can do for the Lord is ever wasteful or unnecessary.

A. T. Robertson notes that "nard" is the head or spike of an Eastern Indian plant, and that it is very fragrant. The marginal note is "*liquid nard*," and some idea of the monetary value of such concentrated perfumes may be learned from the cost of attar of roses. Peloubet says that four hundred full-grown roses are needed to furnish one ounce of oil; and that that small amount of oil sells for as much as one hundred dollars per ounce, or twelve

hundred dollars for the amount equal to Mary's gift. Jesus had been a true friend to Mary and her family, and and there was no sacrifice too great for her to make for him.

But as great as the friendship was between Jesus and Mary, along with her sister and brother, it is nothing to be compared to the friendship with the Lord, which a redeemed child of God enjoys. But when one beholds the avaricious and miserly spirit which characterizes the giving (?) on the part of some professed Christians, he is made to wonder if such people realize what it means to be saved from sin, or what a friend they have in Jesus. Matthew and Mark say that Mary anointed the head of Jesus, while John says that she anointed his feet, and wiped them with her hair. She probably did both, "and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." In the words of George T. Coster,

It was her best, and yet how poor
That cruse of spikenard sweet and
rare!
She enter in at Simon's door
With trembling, though familiar
there.
What could she give to him whose
call
Had brought her brother back
from death?
It was her best, yet poor and small
For him, the Lord of pulse and
breath!
He took the fragrant gift: a wreath
Of praise he twined about her
name.
It lit for him the cave of death:
'Against my burial she came!'

The Lord's Response

(Mark 14: 6-9)

But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying. And verily I say unto you, Whosoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

We learn from John that the chief complainer against Mary's generosity was Judas. "But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, saith, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor? Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein. Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always." (John 12: 4-8.)

It is interesting to note that immediately after Jesus administered the rebuke to Judas, that the latter went out and made arrangements to betray the Lord into the hands of his enemies. (See Matt. 26: 14-16; Mark 14: 10, 11.) This was doubtless due to the resentment which Judas had in his heart for Jesus; but it should be carefully noted that this was only the occasion for the dastardly act of Judas. He had allowed sin to dwell in his heart; and sin when it is fullgrown, brings forth death. (See James 1: 13-15.) Instead of allowing sin to dwell in the heart, the child of God should see to it that the word of the Lord has its dwelling-place there. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119: 11.) Benedict Arnold was another traitor who fell into sin, following a rebuke which was administered to him by his commander-in-chief, General George Washington.

The entire Bible abounds in teaching regarding the poor. The Lord has always expected his people to show kindness toward the unfortunate; but we should learn from the passage now under consideration that help bestowed upon the needy, must not be at the expense of our duty to the Lord. It is only when Christians have the right attitude toward both the Lord and the needy, that real benefit is received by the latter. No one can be true to Christ, while turning a deaf ear to the cries of those in distress.

There are three responsibilities resting upon every faithful congregation of the Lord's people namely,
(1) self-edification, or building up the church itself; (2) preaching the

gospel to the lost; and (3) helping those in need. In speaking of this last obligation, Paul says, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are

of the household of the faith." (Gal. 6: 10.) Paul emphasized this type of service throughout his career as a gospel preacher. (See Gal. 2: 10; 1 Cor. 16: 1-4; 2 Cor., chapters 8 and 9; Rom. 15: 25, 26.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What do people usually think of when they think of the life of Christ here upon the earth?

What other phase of his life do the gospel narratives set forth?

Where do we find a good picture of this? Where did this family live and what is known of their material circumstances?

The Golden Text

In what context do we find the words of the golden text?

What probable reason did the Synoptic writers have for not mentioning the resurrection of Lazarus?

What is implied regarding the family of Bethany by the fact that Jesus loved them?

A Glimpse At the Home Life of Mary and Martha

What important rule of Bible study is illustrated in this lesson?

What was the probable order of the ages of the two sisters of Bethany?

Why would Jesus especially welcome the fellowship of such a home?

How do we know that our Lord often longed for fellowship with others?

In what way could the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus be described in this respect?

What is the meaning and implication of the term "sat" in verse 39?

What two different attitudes did the two sisters display toward Jesus?

What is the meaning and implication of the word "lumbered"?

What were the many things which were in Martha's mind?

What was the one thing which Mary chose?

What lesson should we learn from these two sisters and their attitudes toward Jesus?

"The Economy of Love's Wastefulness"

In what way was Jesus honored by the people of Bethlehem and where?

What parts did Mary, Martha, and Lazarus have at the supper?

What made Mary's act so outstanding?

What was the probable cost of her gift and why was she so generous?

What effect did it have on Jesus?

What important lesson should we get from the attitude and action of Mary?

What did Jesus ordain concerning it?

The Lord's Response

Who was the chief complainer against the action of Mary?

Why did he feel as he did toward her generosity?

What dastardly act came from the occasion now before us?

Why could Judas feel as he did toward Jesus?

What response did Jesus make to the complaint of Judas and others of like mind?

What does the Bible teach with reference of the Lord's people and the poor?

What three categories of work is the church of the Lord obligated to do?

Lesson VI—February 9, 1969

PAUL, APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

Lesson Text

Acts 22: 3-10; Phil. 3: 7-14

3 I am a Jew, born in Tar-sus of Ci-li'-ci-a, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Ga-ma'-li-el, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day:

4 And I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Da-mas-cus to bring them

also that were there unto Je-ru'-sa-lem in bonds to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Da-mas-cus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Je'-sus of Naz'-a-reth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me

beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Da-mas'-cus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

7 Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Je'-sus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, *even* that which is of the law, but that

which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death;

11 If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Je'-sus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing *I do*, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before.

14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Je'-sus.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I was appointed a preacher and an apostle."* (1 Tim. 2: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 9: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

February 3. M.....	Saul, Persecutor of Christians (Acts 26: 1-11)
February 4. T.....	Saul's Conversion (Acts 22: 3-10)
February 5. W.....	Saul's Name Changed to Paul (Acts 13: 4-12)
February 6. T.....	Paul to Witness for Christ (Acts 26: 21-32)
February 7. F.....	Paul's Suffering for Christ (2 Cor. 11: 16-33)
February 8. S.....	A Speech of Paul (Acts 17: 22-31)
February 9. S.....	Paul Writes of His Death (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)

TIME.—Acts, A.D. 57; Philippians, A.D. 63 or 64.

PLACES.—Jerusalem; Philippians was written in Rome.

PERSONS.—Paul and others.

Introduction

When one reads through the Book of Acts, his attention is focused upon one of the most unusual men in history. He is first known as Saul of Tarsus, but later as Paul the Apostle; and if one wants to read the secular books which have been written about him, he will quickly note that superlatives are frequently employed in the effort to give an adequate description of the kind of man he was, and of the amount of work which he did. It matters not from what standpoint one may view this man, he will continue to grow in grandeur, regardless of the amount of critical analysis to which he is subjected. His life, as someone has pointed out, was shaped with infinite skill and wisdom; and he apparently had everything which was needed to make his life suc-

cessful, especially after his conversion to Christ.

When we first meet the man about whom we are to study today, he was guarding the garments of the witnesses who were stoning Stephen, the first Christian martyr, to death. He was probably a member of Cilician synagogue, in Jerusalem (see Acts 6: 8ff), and was very likely one of the men who had engaged Stephen in debate. Although referred to as a young man, that does not necessarily mean that he was young in our sense of the term; but young in contrast with the elders. Some Bible students regard Saul's remark in Acts 26: 10, with reference to his *vote*, as indicating that he was himself a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin; but we do not have any definite information on that subject. The

two autobiographical statements which he gave, and which have been preserved by Luke (Acts 22: 1-21; 26: 2-23), should be carefully read at this time. A part of the latter passage is quoted here, and it is easy to see the motives which actuated this great man in all of his activities.

"And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blasphemous; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at mid-day, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language,

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance." (Acts 26: 10-20; cf. 1 Tim. 1: 12-16.)

The Golden Text

"I was appointed a preacher and an apostle." It isn't difficult for one to see and understand why Paul became one of the world's greatest gospel preachers. He had a sufficient motive, and he was never untrue to it. "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." In his book, *Men of Action in the Book of Acts*, Paul S. Rees heads the chapter on the man of our lesson today, *Paul: The Man Who Kept the Vision*; and he divides the chapter into three sections, namely, the Vision of (1) Life's Deliverers; (2) Life's Design; and (3) Life's Destiny. And then as the author brings the chapter to a close, he sums up his findings in this way:

(1) The vision of life's deliverer: without Christ life is useless; (2) the vision of life's design: without Christ life is aimless; and (3) the vision of life's destiny: without Christ life is hopeless.

And when one studies the methods which Paul employed in his work, it is not surprising for him to exclaim, This man was one of the greatest and most effective preachers who ever lived. J. Oswald San-

ders lists some of Paul's preaching methods, which any one who reads the New Testament can easily see for himself. As an introduction to these methods, Dr. Sanders goes on to say, "If preaching be gauged by its results, then Paul was the prince of preachers. He was the exemplification of his own words to Timothy: 'Preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.' (2 Tim: 4: 2.) His preaching was not confined to public discourse. He laid no claim to oratory: I came to you, not with excellency of speech.' (1 Cor. 2: 1.) He did not breathe bombast and self-confidence: I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling.' (1 Cor. 2: 3.) His reliance was not on the sophistry of this world: 'My message was not in plausible words of wisdom.' (1 Cor. 2: 4.) His sole dependence was on the Holy Spirit and his preaching 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'"

The methods which Paul used in his preaching varied with the occasion. At times it was *polemical*. If

those in his audience needed proof, he was fully able to present it. "But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ." (Acts 9: 22; 17: 17; 18: 4.) At times Paul's preaching was *persuasive*, that is, it was especially characterized by entreaty and appeal. He did not simply present facts and arguments, and leave the matter there.

"Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. 5: 11.) Paul believed in the coming judgment, and that lent urgency to his preaching. At other times, Paul's preaching was *didactic*, which means that he sought to teach and instruct his hearers. (Read Acts 18: 11.) Thus, the *versatility* of his preaching is seen in the variety of his approach, as he expressed the matter in 1 Corinthians 9: 19-22.

The Text Explained

Paul's Attempt to Defend Himself

(Acts 22: 3-10)

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

If one will read Acts 21: 17, and on through the remainder of the chapter, he will see Paul and his company as they entered Jerusalem, following the completion of his third great missionary journey. They were bringing the money which had been collected for the poor saints, in and around Jerusalem; and among the first things which they did, after reaching the

city, was to meet with some of the leaders of the church, including James the Lord's brother and the elders. After Paul had rehearsed his ministry among the Gentiles, and the brethren had expressed their joy for that which had been accomplished, they realized that trouble might be imminent, since many of the brethren among the Judaizers were present in the city. It appears that James and the elders suggested a plan to Paul which they felt might relieve the situation somewhat; but not only did the proposed plan not work: it actually was the occasion for Paul's arrest and near-murder. But the apostle was rescued by the chief captain, and was later permitted to deliver the address from which this section of the lesson text is taken.

Many of the Judaizers suspected Paul of being a renegade from the faith of his fathers, and those who were responsible for the situation into which Paul was thrust accused him of specific violations of the law, with reference to the temple; and, knowing how many of the orthodox Jews felt toward the Grecian Jews, they apparently felt that they had an ironclad case against him. But Paul felt no resentment for those who had mistreated him, or for their sympathizers; but sought only to get them to see the truth regarding the issues which were before them. He called them brethren and fathers, and was careful to speak to them in the only language which they respected, namely, the language of their fathers and which concerned their religion. Paul's introduction therefore was characterized by rhetorical adroitness, and it had its desired effect, that is, he got the attention of his auditors. And it is easy to see that the apostle's aim,

was not his personal justification, but the winning of others to Christ. This should be an impressive lesson to us in our dealings with those who may differ from us. Conciliation, where no principle of right is violated, is always a wise course to follow.

Those who are acquainted with the Book of Acts are aware of the fact that there are three separate accounts of the conversion of Paul; and they are found in chapters nine, twenty-two, and twenty-six. The first account is plainly historical, being Luke's report of the incident; while the other two are the historian's record of the use which Paul himself made of that which happened in his case, and the significance of it. It has already been pointed out that Paul's purpose in the account now before us, was to conciliate the Jews who were clamoring for his destruction. In chapter twenty-six the apostle was given the opportunity of speaking before a royal or court audience; and he used the opportunity, more or less, as an attorney to present his own position, inasmuch as he had been put to the necessity of appealing to Caesar. But in both instances, his principal hope was to win his listeners to Christ.

As Paul began the address which we are considering at this time, he clearly identified himself with reference to nationality, place of birth, education, and the kind of life which he had lived. His statement here is similar to the one he made to the Philippians, as he warned them against the Judaizers. (See Phil. 3: 5, 6.) There were many in Paul's Jerusalem audience who knew that he was telling the truth in every word which he uttered. It is altogether probable that some of them had actually been associated with him in the bitter persecution of the church, which he so successfully waged. (Cf. Acts 8: 3; Gal. 1: 13, 14.)

Although born outside of Palestine, Paul was carefully educated at the feet of one of the most renowned teachers of his day; and, as he told the Philippian brethren, he was reared a Pharisee, hence, "instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers." J. S. Howson says that Gamaliel's learn-

ing was so eminent, and his character so revered, "that he is one of the seven who alone among Jewish doctors have been honored with the title of 'Rabban.' As Acquinas, among the schoolmen, was called Doctor Angelicus, and Bonaventura, Doctor Seraphicus, so Gamaliel was called the 'Beauty of the Law'; and it is a saying of the Talmud, that 'since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law has ceased.'" All of this goes to show that Paul was one of the most highly educated and respected men of his day among the Jews before his conversion.

Paul carefully explained his position with reference to persecuting the church to the court audience in Caesarea, as may be seen by reading Acts 26: 9-11. And it is no wonder that he told his Jerusalem audience that he "persecuted this way unto the death." Furneaux suggests that Paul probably used "this Way" instead of *Christianity*, in order to avoid any irritating name for the Christian body. (Cf. Acts 9: 2.) Paul was endeavoring to show his listeners that he was as zealous for God, as they were; and it was as if he had said, If you doubt my word, ask the high priest and all the estate of the elders. It is altogether possible that there were some in the audience that day who remembered the details of the matters about which Paul spoke. Paul's activities, at the time he referred to in his address, show what misguided zeal can do; and anyone who stops to think today, is aware of the fact that that spirit is still very much alive.

After having told his listeners that he was as they were, at the time he asked for and obtained the letters to Damascus, the apostle evidently next tried to answer a question, which must have been in their minds, namely, what caused him to make the change which he made? His answer was both immediate and adequate: he met Jesus on his way to Damascus! and, as he told Agrippa, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. People today, of course, cannot see Jesus in person, as Paul did; but they can meet him in his word. And when they do come face to face with the Lord, and realize what it is all about, they are not going to be the same people after that, even to the point of suf-

fering persecution. When Paul earned the identity of the one who spoke to him, his whole outlook on life was changed; and he immediately ask for direction, and was immediately told how to obtain that information.

The Manner in Which Paul Reacted to His New Outlook on Life

(Phil. 3: 7-11)

Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

The things which Paul says that he gave up for Christ were those characteristics which had to do with his fleshly attainments, as may be seen by reading the following passage: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." (Phil. 3: 5, 6.) But Paul evidently understood the basic requirement of becoming a follower of Christ, as expressed by Jesus himself (see Matt. 16: 24), and he immediately got himself out of the way, and centered his whole attention on the Saviour of men. (Cf. Rom. 10: 1-3.) It is only through Christ that any one can reach God, and dwell with him for ever and ever; and inasmuch as it was Paul's sole objective to please God (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 9), he began at once to act in keeping with the divine arrangements.

When Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, he made it plain that salvation is the gift of God. "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." (Eph. 2: 8, 9.) And then in his letter to Titus, he says, "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3: 5.) God has made it abundantly clear that no one can be saved, apart from Christ; and that simply means that one must come to him with no claim of his own merit whatsoever: and that was precisely what Paul was doing, when he gave up every characteristic and achievement, which were according to the flesh. (Cf. the songs, *Rock of Ages*, and *Just As I Am*.)

The righteousness which is of the law, and the righteousness which is through faith in Christ, are set over against each other; and they are both fully discussed in the Book of Romans. Paul makes it clear in his letter to the churches in Galatia, that no one was ever able to keep the law of Moses, to the extent that he could thereby claim salvation as something what he had earned; and that is what he was saying to the Philippian brethren, namely, that he made no effort whatsoever, after learning of Christ, to obtain righteousness before God by means of the law; instead, he sought that righteousness through faith in Christ Jesus, or, which is the same thing, he believed that Jesus Christ is the Saviour, and he endeavored to do that which the Lord commands, so that he would accept him. (Heb. 5: 8, 9.) This kind of an attitude led Paul to endeavor to become as nearly like Jesus, as it was possible for him to do. In commenting on "becoming conformed unto his death," Vincent notes that "the most radical conformity is thus indicated: not merely undergoing physical death like Christ, but conformity to the spirit and temper, the meekness and submissiveness of Christ; to his unselfish love and devotion, and his anguish over human sin."

Paul's View of the Road Ahead

(Phil. 3: 12-14)

Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was

laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul's change from his remarks regarding the Judaizers to those concerning the advocates of "antinomianism" is so smoothly done, that the careless reader may fail to realize what the apostle was doing. But if the reader will carefully examine the entire chapter, it will be relatively easy to see that Paul was not referring to the same people in the two sections of the lesson text, which are taken from Philippians. The Judaizers were unscrupulous, but there is no evidence that they had their belly as their god, that they gloried in their shame, and had their mind set on earthly things, as those whom Paul condemned in the closing part of chapter 3 did.

The *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* defines an "antinomian" (*anti*, against + *nomos*, law) as "one who maintains that Christians are freed from the moral law by virtue of grace as set forth in the gospel." This simply means that the Lord's people, during this dispensation, if that doctrine were true, are free to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, according to their desires, even to the point of sexual immorality at will. (Cf. 1 Cor. 6:

12ff.) And so, without calling them by name, Paul used his own case, as he so often did, to denounce a vicious doctrine and practice of his day. Those people did not think that a high standard of morality was essential to their acceptance with God; but that their faith alone would be sufficient to commend them to his favor.

The apostle Paul was conscious of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ had taken hold of him; and it was for that reason that he felt himself under obligation to "press on." The tense of the verb (first aorist passive of *katalambanō*) makes it clear that Paul was thinking of a definite historic event, namely, his conversion. Jesus had laid hold on him, so that he became the bondservant of Christ, and was therefore no longer his own (Cf. 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) The text plainly indicates that Christ had a definite purpose in taking hold of Paul. (Acts 9: 15.) But conversion is always purposeful. (1 Pet. 2: 9.) The scientists talk about the "transformation of energy"; and it is easy to see that the same idea is involved in conversion to Christ. (Cf. Rom. 6: 16-18; Gal. 1: 23.) Christ laid hold on Paul (1) to give him peace of mind, (2) to make a new man out of him, and (3) to change him into a missionary. Paul saw the vision, and he pressed forward until he was called to go and be with Jesus. (Cf. Phil. 1: 23; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What kind of an impression does one get when he reads about Paul in the Book of Acts?
Under what circumstances do we first meet him?
What kind of a picture of himself did he present to his royal or court audience?

The Golden Text

Why did the apostle Paul become such an outstanding preacher?
Why was he appointed to the apostleship?
To what great vision was he always true?
Why was this so important to him?
In what way did Paul regard his preaching?
What were some of the methods which he employed in his work as a gospel preacher?

Paul's Attempt to Defend Himself

Give the facts in the inspired narrative which lead up to this section of the lesson text.
Why were some of the Jewish people, and even church members, so violently opposed to Paul?
How did Paul himself feel toward them?
Give reasons for your answer.
In what way did Paul begin his address to the people in Jerusalem?
What important lesson should we learn from this?
Why did Luke give so much space to the conversion of Paul?
What important facts did Paul give regarding himself as he began to speak?
What can you say regarding the training which he had received at the feet of Gamaliel?
What special points did Paul emphasize as he progressed with his address?

The Manner in Which Paul Reacted to His
New Outlook on Life

What were the things which Paul gave up for Christ?
What vital requirement did he recognize in becoming a follower of Christ?
In what sense is salvation the gift of God?
Discuss the righteousness of the law *versus* the righteousness by faith in Christ.
What does it mean for one to become conformed to the death of Christ?

Paul's View of the Road Ahead

What important change did Paul make in the last two sections of the lesson text?
Who were the Judaizers and who were the advocates of antinomianism?

What are some of the implications of the teaching of antinomianism?
What plan did Paul use to denounce that vicious doctrine?
Under what great obligation did Paul feel himself?
In what way did Jesus lay hold on him?
What was the Lord's purpose in thus "arresting" Saul the persecutor?
What is always true with reference to conversion? Give reasons for your answer.
What three things were accomplished when Jesus laid hold on Paul?
In what way did Paul react to that which Jesus did to him?
Why is it essential that every child of God continue his march forward in the service of Christ?

Lesson VII—February 16, 1969

BARNABAS, THE EXHORTER

Lesson Text

Acts 4: 36, 37; 11: 22-26; 13: 1-3

36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Bar-na-bas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Le-vite, a man of Cy-prus by race.

37 Having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Je-ru'-sa-lem: and they sent forth Bar-na-bas as far as An-ti-och:

23 Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord:

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 And he went forth to Tar'-sus to seek for Saul;

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto An-ti-och. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Chris'-tians first in An-ti-och.

1 Now there were at An'-ti-och, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Bar-na-bas, and Sym'-e-on that was called Ni'-ger, and Lu'-cius of Cy-re'-ne, and Man'-a-en the foster-brother of Her'-od the tetrarch, and Saul.

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."* (Acts 11: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Acts 15: 36-41.

Daily Bible Readings

- February 10. M.....Barnabas, a Good man (Acts 11: 22-26)
- February 11. T.....Barnabas, a Generous Man (Acts 4: 32-37)
- February 12. W.....Barnabas, a Missionary (Acts 13: 1-12)
- February 13. T.....Barnabas, a Great Exhorter (Acts 13: 44-52)
- February 14. F.....Barnabas, a Courageous Man (Acts 15: 1-5)
- February 15. S.....Barnabas, a Loyal Friend (Acts 15: 30-40)
- February 16. S.....Barnabas, an Approved Man (Gal. 2: 1-10)

Time.—A.D. 30-50.

Places.—Jerusalem, Antioch, and Tarsus.

Persons.—Barnabas, Saul, and others.

Introduction

The Bible is unlike all other books in many respects, and one of the most notable of these differences is with reference to the impartiality and truthfulness with which it records the narratives which deal with the people whose lives are set forth in the inspired volume. There is, for example, a remarkable frankness seen in the manner in which the faults of the best people are recorded. This has nothing in common with the cynical spirit which characterizes most historians, as may be seen by reading their writings. It is a recorded fact that many such writers fasten upon the weak places in the noblest of their subjects, somewhat like an insect lights on the bruised portion of the ripest fruit, as they endeavor to show that all goodness is imperfect, and that none is genuine. The writers of the Scriptures, on the other hand, are frank in showing that their best men and women have fallen short of continuous purity; but there is a boldness of hope which characterizes these inspired men, as they endeavor to encourage the weakest and the most sinful of God's people to strive toward that perfection which is essential to acceptance with him. (Cf. Matt. 5: 48; Phil. 3: 12-16.) The Bible is a mirror which gives back all images without distortion.

The value of the kind of revelation which is found in the Bible lies in the fact that it gives to all men the encouragement to do their best with their own lives, by showing that much may be accomplished by the men and women of ordinary stature, and who had only such means with which to work, as may be had by average people. The average person cannot hope to attain the heights which were gained by such men as Peter, Paul, and John; but any conscientious person can aspire to, and can justly have the hope of succeeding in the accomplishments of such men as Andrew and Barnabas. The character which we are to study today is what may be very properly called a simple one, since it does not pertain to a man

who was especially distinguished for his unusual strength, commanding personality, eloquence of speech, or dialectic skill; but Barnabas was a man for all that, and the impression which he left upon the sands of time has not been erased.

If we should consider the character of Barnabas apart from all other people, we would likely think of him as being much greater than he is usually regarded as being; but when we look at him in the light of his associates, his stature is somewhat diminished. This, however, does not make Barnabas any smaller in fact; it only makes him appear so. The reason for this, of course, is seen in the fact of the greatness of those with whom he is compared. Paul, for example, was a much greater personality than Barnabas, when it came to intellectual power and force of character; but that in no sense detracts from the goodness and faithfulness of Barnabas.

The splendid moral and spiritual qualities which belonged to Paul were united with a gifted mind, and eloquent tongue, an originating genius, and the boundless energy which belong to the makers of history. Such men inevitably go to the front, and win the leading places in the estimation of the world. Yet no one can read and study the life and character of Barnabas, as set forth upon the pages of the New Testament, without realizing that he was one of God's people who have been pressed out of their proper place, by the greatness of their associates or those in whose shadows they were compelled to live. Although it was unintentionally done, such victims have been dwarfed in history by the greater prominence, wider reach, and visible influence of some of their contemporaries. But, in the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

The Golden Text

This portion of our study today is found in the principal text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

The Text Explained

The Kind of Man Barnabas Was

(Acts 4: 36, 37)

And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Any one who is a careful reader of the Word of the Lord will be impressed with the great importance which is everywhere attached to names. It frequently happened in the Old Testament that a person's name was changed, because it no longer adequately described his character; and that practice was also continued during the New Testament period. Jacob, for example, was at first a "heel-catcher" (Gen. 25: 24-26, and marginal note); but when he became a man whom God could use in his service, his name was changed to Israel (see Gen. 32: 22-28.) Jesus knew that the name "Simon" would not be suitable for the man who would one day cease his wavering and become as stable as the rock; and so he said to him, "Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be called . . . Peter." (John 1: 42.)

And so it was with Joseph, one of the early Christians, and the man about whom we are studying today. His place in the work of the Lord was so distinct, that his original name would not adequately describe him; and so the apostles called him "Barnabas," which Luke, parenthetically, explains to mean "Son of exhortation," or, as the marginal note has it, *Son of consolation*. And, as in the case of Simon, the change in names was so complete, that very few people today know him by his original name. There is indeed nothing said regarding the occasion for the change in names, with reference to the Joseph of our lesson today, as was true in the cases of Jacob, Simon and others;

but it is not difficult for us to see, even in the relatively short account of Barnabas in the New Testament, a singular degree of correspondence between his character and his new name.

And there was also some reason why Luke saw fit to single out Barnabas as a liberal-hearted Christian, that is, as an example of those who sold their possessions, in order to provide for the less fortunate. It may have been because of the prominent place, which Barnabas later occupied in the history of the church; or it could have been for the purpose of providing a suitable contrast between people like Barnabas, and such characters as Ananias and Sapphira, the account of whom immediately follows that with reference to Barnabas. (Acts 5: 1-11.) But whatever may have been Luke's reason for his remark regarding the generosity of Barnabas, we know that it was in keeping with his character. Many other Christians were doing the same thing (Acts 4: 32-35); but only the name of the man about whom we are studying today was given. Luke's record of these events was written long after they took place, and that fact should be taken into consideration, when we endeavor to discover a reason for the singling out of Barnabas' generosity.

We are not told where the field which belonged to Barnabas was located, but since he was a native of Cyprus, it may have been on that island. Being a Levite, Barnabas would not have a regular inheritance in Palestine, as members of the other tribes had. (Cf. Lev. 25: 32-34; Num. 35: 1-8; Deut. 12: 12; 18: 6-8.) The field, of course, could have been in one of the suburbs of a Levitical city in Canaan. But wherever his property may have been located, Barnabas was himself proficient in the grace of steward-

ship. He had learned the truthfulness of the teaching of Jesus who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20: 35.) This son of generosity, about whom we are studying today, recognized the ownership of God, and he was willing to put himself, and all that he had, at his Father's disposal, when once he knew the will of the Lord regarding such matters. It seems fair to assume, from 1 Corinthians 9: 1-12, that Barnabas disposed of his means of a livelihood, and gave himself over entirely to the work of preaching the gospel.

A Good Man Who Put His Talents to Work

(Acts 11: 22-26)

And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Those who are acquainted with the historical records of Luke, that is, with the *Book of Luke* and *Acts of Apostles*, are aware of the fact that he was an orderly writer, and it is easy to see an example of that characteristic at this point in our lesson for today. If one will go back to the beginning of the eighth chapter of Acts, he will see the occasion for the scattering of the Jerusalem church into the neighboring regions; and he will also be able to see the orderly manner in which the historian traces the progress of the gospel in a number of places, until it finally was offered to, and was accepted by, the Gentiles. (Acts 8: 1-11: 18.) And then, going back to Jerusalem, Luke again calls attention to the occasion for the great

missionary undertaking, which was then in progress, in the following words:

"They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11: 19-21.)

It was the situation, described in the passage just quoted, which furnished the occasion for sending Barnabas to Antioch, as set forth in this section of the lesson text for today's lesson. This Antioch was at that time in Syria, but it is now in Turkey, as may be seen by consulting maps, then and now. Jerusalem was the headquarters of the apostles (cf. Acts 8: 1), and was still the base of their operations. Either the apostles themselves, or some others whom they designated, kept in close touch with the preaching of the gospel, wherever and by whomsoever it was done. And the fact that Barnabas, rather than Peter, or one of the other apostles, was sent to investigate the conditions in Antioch, was probably due to the fact that Peter had already explained the reception of the Gentiles (Cornelius and his household) to the Jerusalem brethren. (Acts 11: 1-18.) And too, as Howson suggests, "the Jewish Christians in Antioch might be perplexed how to deal with their new Gentile converts: and it is not unnatural to suppose that the presence of Barnabas might be anxiously desired by the fellow missionaries of his native island." (*The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Conybeare and Howson, p. 97—Eerdmans.)

Antioch, as one can see from the map, was not far from Cyprus, and Barnabas may have had a previous acquaintance with the conditions in the city, at the time of this lesson; and if so, that would have made him a natural choice for the task in hand. At any rate, he was selected for the work, and was sent to the scene by the Jerusalem brethren. The "grace of God" which Barnabas

saw was the result of preaching the gospel to the Greeks in Antioch. This caused him to rejoice; and, bringing into use his exceptional powers of exhortation, for which he was already noted, "he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." In other words, he urged them to have a definite goal before them, as an object of attainment. It often happens that the glow of one's initial enthusiasm passes away, following a revival; but if a definite aim is before those who give themselves to the Lord, it will be much easier for them to make a success of the holy calling. (Cf. Rev. 2: 4; Phil. 3: 12-14.) A doctrinal teacher, and a consecrated exhorter, make a wonderful team in gospel work.

Barnabas is referred to in the text as a "good man," which evidently implies more than simply a man with an upright character. (See Romans 5: 7 for the difference between a righteous man and a good man.) A *righteous* man simply does that which he ought to do, and endeavors to give to every man that which is due him. The *good* man, on the other hand, does all that the righteous man does, but he does more. Not only does he do that which he should do, and give to every man that which is due him; he also does that which he can to promote the well being of those with whom he has to do. The calling of Barnabas, a good man, is one of the few instances in the New Testament, in which an inspired writer pays a personal tribute to another individual. But just because a person today is sometimes called a good man, is not necessarily saying that he is a good man in the sense that Barnabas was. It appears that people in this age often have something else in mind.

The term "good," as applied to people in this age of the world, has lost much of its true significance. Most any negative person, who doesn't engage in the common vices of the day, is often called a good fellow; but that is not the sense in which Luke used the term with reference to Barnabas. *Goodness* is listed by Paul as a fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5: 22.) Luke says that Barnabas was "full of the Holy Spirit" (cf. Eph. 5: 18), which im-

plies that he was deeply spiritual. He also says that he was *full of faith*, that is, he was characterized by an abiding faith, which evidently included faith in God (Heb. 11: 6), and faith in his fellow men (see Acts 9: 26f).

And then later on, following the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15, Paul proposed to Barnabas that they go again and visit the churches which they established on their first missionary journey. Barnabas apparently was agreeable to the suggestion, but he "was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." A sharp contention arose between Paul and Barnabas over this issue, with the result that the two fellow-workers "parted asunder one from the other." (Acts 15: 39.) Barnabas chose Mark to go with him, while Paul decided on Silas as his fellow-laborer. With a man who had such faith in God and in his fellow men, such as Barnabas demonstrated, it is not surprising to read that "much people was added unto the Lord" in Antioch, as a result of his labors there.

Barnabas evidently soon saw that there was need for additional help in the work which he was trying to do; and he therefore went to Tarsus to seek for Saul, who had been sent back to his homeland by the Jerusalem brethren, when they knew that his life was being threatened. (Acts 22: 3; 9: 28-30.) Barnabas knew of the character and ability of Saul, and he evidently felt that he would be an ideal co-laborer in the new work in Antioch. The original word for "seek," in Acts 11: 25, occurs in only one other passage in the New Testament, namely, Luke 2: 44, 45. The term means, according to Robertson, to seek up and down, back and forth, to make a thorough search, till success comes. It is possible that Barnabas knew that Saul has been called for work among the Gentiles (cf. Acts 9: 15; 26: 12-18), and, realizing, his own limitations in the face of the magnitude of the work to be done in Antioch, he determined to go to Tarsus, seek for Saul until he found him, and then bring him to the metropolitan cen-

ter, where work among the Gentiles had already been started. And, as Robertson observes, the hour and the man met, when Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch. A year-long meeting followed; and it was there that the disciples were, for the first time, called Christians. This was probably some eight or ten years after the Pentecost of Acts 2.

Barnabas and Saul Divinely Chosen As Missionaries

(Acts 13: 1-3)

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Those who are familiar with the Book of Acts are aware of the fact that it is generally recognized that chapter 13 is the beginning of the second major part of the historical record, which was written by Luke. Peter was the principal character in the first part (chapters 1-12), while Paul is the dominant personality in the second part (chapters 13-28). The first part was mainly concerned with preaching the gospel to the Jewish people, while the second half is mainly concerned with the effort to get the gospel to the Gentiles. Some work was done in the first part among the Gentiles, and some work was done in the second part among the Jews; but the two parts, by and large are concerned principally with the Jews and Gentiles, respectively.

Antioch, as one naturally gathers from the preceding section of the lesson text, had, at the time of this lesson, supplanted Jerusalem as the principal center of Christian activity. The church in the Syrian city had, within a relatively short time, grown into the first cosmopolitan body of believers; and, as we look in upon it, at the beginning of this section of our lesson for today, it is easy to see that it was well supplied

with gifted teachers and leaders. The five men who are named in the text now under consideration were called "prophets and teachers." A "prophet," as has been pointed out from time to time, was one who spoke for God, and that implies that the prophets now before us spoke by inspiration. This may not have always been true of the kind of "teachers" referred to in the text. All prophets were teachers, but not all teachers were prophets. Howson notes that "it is sufficient to remark that the 'prophecy' of the New Testament does not necessarily imply a knowledge of things to come, but rather a gift of exhorting with a peculiar force of inspiration." (Op. cit., p. 108.)

Of the five men mentioned in the text, we are, in this lesson, primarily concerned with Barnabas. He, along with Saul, was the kind of man whom the Holy Spirit could use in taking the gospel to the great Gentile world. Barnabas may have been some older than Saul, but it is practically certain that he was in Christ before the latter was. Before leaving on their missionary journey, the order of their names was Barnabas and Saul, but they had not gone very far before the order was changed to "Paul and his company," or simply "Paul and Barnabas." When the events proved that Paul was the better qualified man to be the leader, Barnabas quietly fell into second place; and it was not long before he was allowed to drop completely out of the picture. B. C. Goodpasture, in his book, *Sermons and Lectures*, points out that although Barnabas had been overshadowed by Paul, there was no jealousy, no bitterness, no resentment on the part of Barnabas; for he was a good man. All of this implies that Barnabas was entirely free from selfishness (cf. Matt. 16: 24); his sole interest was in the progress of the gospel. Brother Goodpasture further notes that "Barnabas is the kind of man that we can imitate. If we were thinking about Moses or David or Paul, we might think that they were five-talent men, tall and apart from us. But Barnabas was a man down on the common level. What he did we can do. We can do good to people as Barnabas did."

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

How does the Bible differ from other literary productions?

What is the value of the kind of revelation which is found in the Scriptures?

How does the character of Barnabas appear to us as we consider him alone, and then in the light of those associated with him?

What makes this difference?

What, then, is the over-all effect on the character of Barnabas, as it is studied in the full light of the New Testament?

How should we feel regarding our own characters, as they are considered in the light of those who may be about us?

What can every one of us resolve to do?

The Kind of Man Barnabas Was

What importance does the Bible attach to names?

What are some of the prominent examples of this practice which come to your mind?

Why was the name of the man about whom we are studying today changed?

Why, apparently, was the case of Barnabas singled out by Luke here?

What did the action of Barnabas imply regarding his character or the type of man he was?

What is the scriptural meaning of "stewardship"?

How much of his earthly possessions did Barnabas apparently give away for the cause of Christ?

A Good Man Who Put His Talents to Work

Discuss the plan which Luke followed in writing the Book of Acts.

What is the advantage of arranging the historical record as he did?

Give the facts which lead up to this section of the lesson text?

Why was Barnabas sent to Antioch?

Where was that city located?

What did Barnabas find when he reached the city and how was he affected?

What does it mean to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart?

Why is it that a doctrinal teacher and a consecrated exhorter make such a good gospel team?

What did Luke mean by saying that Barnabas was a "good man"?

In what way is that expression often used by people today?

In what ways did Barnabas demonstrate that he was a man of faith?

What were some of the results of the labors of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch?

Barnabas and Saul Divinely Chosen As Missionaries

In what way is the Book of Acts divided?

Why was Antioch, rather than Jerusalem, chosen as the base of missionary activities among the Gentiles?

Who were the "prophets and teachers" in the church in Antioch?

Give a summary of the character of Barnabas.

Lesson VIII—February 23, 1969

DORCAS, WHO LOVED THE POOR

Lesson Text

Acts 9: 32-42

32 And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lyd'-da.

33 And there he found a certain man named Æ'-ne-as, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied.

34 And Peter said unto him, Æ'-ne-as, Je'-sus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose.

35 And all that dwelt at Lyd'-da and in Shar'-on saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Jop'-pa a certain disciple named Tab'-i-tha, which by interpretation is called Dor'-cas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those

days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38 And as Lyd'-da was nigh unto Jop'-pa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us.

39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dor'-cas made, while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said Tab'-i-tha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*A worthy woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies.*” (Prov. 31: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Lev. 25: 25-47.

42 And it became known throughout all Jop'-pa: and many believed on the Lord.

Daily Bible Readings

February 17. M.....	Peter Heals Aeneas at Lydda (Acts 9: 32-35)
February 18. T.....	Death of Dorcas (Acts 9: 36-39)
February 19. W.....	Peter Raises Dorcas from the Dead (Acts 9: 40-43)
February 20. T.....	Source of Peter's Power (Acts 4: 8-12)
February 21. F.....	God's Concern for the Poor (Prov. 22: 1-9)
February 22. S.....	Pure Religion (James 1: 26, 27; 1 Tim. 5: 16)
February 23. S.....	A Worthy Woman (Prov. 31: 10-31)

TIME.—Probably about A.D. 40.

PLACES.—Lydda, Sharon, Joppa.

PERSONS.—Dorcas, Peter, and others.

Introduction

When James wrote the epistle which bears his name, he included in it a statement regarding the poor, which is familiar to all Bible readers, namely, “Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1: 27.) James, of course does not mean to say that this is all there is to religion; instead, he sets forth that which may be regarded as a practical demonstration of that which is essential to an acceptance with God. The adjectives “pure” and “undefiled” indicate the positive and negative qualities of the kind of religion which is pleasing to God; and the two examples which the writer cites are (1) benevolence, and (2) personal purity. It is, of course, well to consider both of these aspects of religion, but we are primarily concerned with the benevolent feature in this lesson.

Marvin R. Vincent, in commenting on the passage which was quoted in the preceding paragraph, says, “James strikes a downright blow here at ministry by proxy, or by mere gifts of money. Pure and undefiled religion demands *personal contact* with the world's sorrow: to *visit* the afflicted, and to visit them *in their affliction.*” Dr. Vincent then quotes from Lecky's *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, p. 98, the following: “The rich man, prodigal of money, which is to him of little

value, but altogether incapable of devoting any personal attention to the object of his alms, often injures society by his donations; but this is rarely the case with that far nobler charity which makes men familiar with the haunts of wretchedness, and follows the object of its care through all the phases of his life.”

In a fairly recent and most helpful book, *James Speaks for Today*, Herbert L. Stevenson notes that “it is significant that the word which James uses here for ‘religion’ means the outward manifestation of religion: the showing-forth of faith. He is not saying that deeds of kindness are in themselves pure and genuine religion, but rather that they are evidence of such religion in the one who performs them. All through history the great hindrance to true godliness has been *religion*, as commonly conceived. It has always been so easy to mistake mere observances for the reality of religious faith. Observances and ceremonies have been regarded as the evidence of inward attitude and vital relationship with God; and if only these are punctiliously observed, then inward reality has been taken for granted. No greater deception was ever devised by the devil; no greater fallacy ever blinded the minds of men. It is astounding to see how blatantly ungodly people have beguiled themselves into believing that, by performing rites and ceremonies, they satisfy the righteous requirements

of God and put themselves in good standing with him!"

The apostle John says, "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: 17, 18.) This statement is in keeping with the picture of the judgment, which Jesus set forth in Matthew 25: 31-46, along with his comments regarding those who will be there. After describing the glory and majesty of the king upon his

throne, the Lord next gives the reason for the public acknowledgement of the righteous. The acts which he mentions are deeds of mercy, which fall in the category of good works; and they also of course, pre-suppose a background of faith and love. The fatherless and widows, mentioned by James, could be afflicted without necessarily being poor; but they are usually thought of as being in need. The original word for "affliction," as used by James, means, according to Arndt-Gingrich, to be in difficult circumstances. (Cf. 2 Cor. 8: 13, where the same original word is found.)

The Golden Text

"A worthy woman who can find? for her price is far above rubies." These are the opening words of an acrostic poem, that is, a poem in which the first letter of each of the twenty-two verses begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in descending scale. (There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet.) The words of the poem are apparently those of "king Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him." (Prov. 31. 1.) It would be a good practice for every person, who regards the Bible as being the word of God, and especially every woman who aspires to be a wife and mother, to read this poem frequently. And it is doubtful if any comments on the words of the golden text can be recorded, which will equal the reading of the context itself; and inasmuch as it was written in poetic form, the quotation given below is from the *Revised Standard Version*, which is one of the clearest and easiest to read of the translations we have of this passage.

A good wife who can find?
 She is far more precious than
 jewels.
 The heart of her husband trusts in
 her,
 and he will have no lack of gain.
 She does him good, and not harm,
 all the days of her life.
 She seeks wool and flax, and works
 with willing hands.
 She is like the ships of the mer-
 chant,
 she brings her food from afar.
 She rises while it is yet night and

provides food for her household
 and tasks for her maidens.
 She considers a field and buys it;
 with the fruit of her hands she
 plants a vineyard.
 She girds her loins with strength
 and makes her arms strong.
 She perceives that her merchandise
 is profitable.
 Her lamp does not go out at night.
 She puts her hands to the distaff,
 and her hands hold the spindle.
 She opens her hand to the poor,
 and reaches out her hands to the
 needy.
 She is not afraid of snow for her
 household,
 for all her household are clothed
 in scarlet.
 She makes herself coverings;
 her clothing is fine linen and pur-
 ple.
 Her husband is known in the gates,
 when he sits among the elders of
 the land.
 She makes linen garments and sells
 them;
 she delivers girdles to the mer-
 chant.
 Strength and dignity are her cloth-
 ing,
 and she laughs at the time to
 come.
 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
 and the teaching of kindness is on
 her tongue.
 She looks well to the ways of her
 household,
 and does not eat the bread of idle-
 ness.
 Her children rise up and call her
 blessed;
 her husband also, and he praises
 her:

"Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all."
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,

but a woman who fears the Lord
is to be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates.

The Text Explained

Peter at Lydda and a Case of Healing (Acts 9: 32-35)

And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Eneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee; arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

When the Lord appeared to Saul on the Damascus road, and to Ananias in the city, he made known to both that Saul would become a missionary to the Gentiles, and the kings of the earth; and Luke, after recording some facts regarding Saul's conversion and early ministry, interrupted the narrative to show how the Gentiles came to be recognized as gospel subjects. Peter had been given the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16: 19), and it was his privilege therefore to open the doors of the church to both Jews and Gentiles, which he did for the former on Pentecost of Acts 2, and the latter at the house of Cornelius of Acts 10.

Luke had featured Peter, for the most part, in the early portion of the Book of Acts, and now, after finishing his account of the conversion and early work of Saul, he again resumes his narrative regarding the apostle to the circumcision. (Gal. 2: 7, 8.) Peace for the church throughout Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria, had been restored, following the conversion of Saul (Acts 9: 31), and a period of great growth was experienced. This condition enabled Peter to engage in a peaceful evangelistic journey throughout the area; and as he went about from place to place, he came to the saints who dwelt in Lydda, in the northwestern part of Judaea, about ten miles inland from the Mediterranean sea, and some fifteen miles southeast of Joppa. Lydda was the

Old Testament town of Lod, which was built by the sons of Benjamin. (1 Chron. 8: 12.) The town is called Lod today, and near there is located the airport which serves Tel Aviv, the new part of the old city of Joppa.

While engaged in his work in Lydda, Peter found a man by the name of Eneas, who had been bedfast for eight years; and he healed him. Jesus had authorized such miracles during the early days of the church, for the confirmation of the word (cf. Mark 16: 15-20); and Luke, by citing the case in hand, shows how the principle worked. The original for "shall accompany" means to *attend* or be *present* wherever believers were. The Lord did not promise miraculous power to all believers, during the early days of the church; but he did provide for the presence of such power when the gospel was being preached. And, as the text now before us declares, the miracle wrought by Peter had the desired effect; for "all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord." Sharon was the maritime plain, which lies between mount Carmel and Joppa; and it is interesting to note that some of the world's finest orange groves are to be seen there.

The Death of Dorcas and the Call for Peter

(Acts 9: 36-39)

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper cham-

bers and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

The marginal reading for Dorcas is *Gazele*, and her place in the sacred history is chiefly that of a benefactress, especially of poor women, including widows. There is not much said in the Scriptures regarding the personal life of Dorcas; but that which is recorded speaks volumes. *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible* expresses her case in this way: "The special charm of Dorcas' charities lies in the fact that she worked for the poor with her own hands. She is celebrated for her 'good works' as well as for her 'almsdeeds.' If the latter means her gifts, the former would point to her personal actions. Perhaps she remembered her Lord's commendation, 'I was naked and ye clothed me,' and thought that, if it was true that in clothing the poor she clothed Christ, she would do it with no other hands than her own, for it might be that she would, in spirit at least, draw virtue from the hem of his garments while she made them."

Many of the women whose names are found in the New Testament were women who performed service in connection with the work which Christ and the apostles were doing. Old Testament women, in like manner, worked closely with those who were engaged in the service which Jehovah ordained at that time. And if one would like to make a study of these Bible women, he could well do so under the heading, "*Stewardship in the Lives of Women.*" There was, for example, (1) the woman with a little room—stewardship of hospitality. (2 Kings 4: 8-10.) There are many occasions today in which Christian women can use their homes to further the cause of Christ, such as for guests who need such a place, a place for weekly Bible study where neighbors and friends can be taught the truth, the entertainment of students and working people who are away from their own homes.

(2) The woman with the needle—stewardship of sowing. (Acts 9: 26-29.) This is the woman we are considering today. There are many occasions when this type of work

can be engaged in, so as to bring glory to Christ, as, for example, helping to clothe the needy who are without funds, those who have lost their possessions by fire, storm, flood, etc., the elderly who can no longer work for themselves, students who are having a difficult time in making ends meet, et cetera.

(3) The woman with the costly offering—the stewardship of money. (John 12: 1-3.) There are times when help of this nature will do untold good, both by way of supplying a need, and by giving personal encouragement.

(4) The woman with the little son—the stewardship of the family. (1 Sam. 1: 24-28.) The home and the family are the God-given spheres of women, and it is there that they can exert their greatest and most enduring influences. Many women have reared children who have become influential workers in the kingdom of Christ, and have been the direct cause of scores of people's devoting their lives to him. (5) The woman with an hour—the stewardship of time. (Luke 10: 38-42.) Time has been described as the stuff out of which life is made; and it is practically certain that good will be accomplished, if such women are willing to devote time to their preparation for their service for Christ, and to its actual accomplishment.

(6) The woman with a message—the stewardship of the gospel. (John 4: 28-30, 39.) When one comes in contact with Jesus, and submits to his will, he can then exercise a great influence in bringing others to the Lord. The woman of Samaria is a good illustration of the manner in which this principle works. Christian women should be encouraged to greater activities in this respect by that which Peter says to them, namely, that their godly lives are sometimes more effective in winning their husbands to Christ, than their words. (1 Pet. 3: 1-6.) In the expression, "they may without the word be gained," the article is not in the original, and the passage literally says that "they may without word be gained," etc., that is, "without a word." (7) The woman with a little—the stewardship of sacrificial giving. (Mark 12: 41-44.) There is no responsible woman in the church today, who is

unable to make some kind of contribution to the Lord and the cause for which he died; and when one is willing to use what she has, she will always find herself, not only making a contribution to the Lord's work, but also becoming an inspiration and encouragement to others. (Cf. 1 Pet. 4: 10.)

The Raising of Dorcas and the Effect on the People

(Acts 9: 40-42)

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

J. W. McGarvey, in commenting on the events now under consideration, says that nothing could be more graphic than this brief narration, or more touching than the incident itself. Amid the march of imposing events, which are moving before us, it drops in like a wild flower in a stately forest. Its opening a vista through the larger events of the history, lets light in upon the social sorrows of the early saints, and discloses a scene with the like of which our own experiences have made us familiar. Here is the same tender care for the lifeless body, the same distress felt by all, the same desire

for the presence of him who has been our religious counsellor; the same company of weeping women, and of men standing by in mournful silence; the same recounting with sobbing voices of the good deeds done by the departed; and, beyond all this to which we are accustomed, a group of poor widows holding up the garments which Dorcas had made, so that Peter could see them.

What a memorial! How much richer and more to be desired, than the monuments of marble and bronze, covered with flattering inscriptions! Both the life and the death of Dorcas proved to be a blessing to those who knew her. Peter must have thought of his experience in the house of Jairus, as he stood in the house where the body of Dorcas was lying. And with the exception of kneeling down to pray, he followed the example of Jesus in preparing to raise the dead. Peter knew that he was but a man, but he remembered the promise of Jesus, and was fully aware that anything which he did would be by God's power, working through him. He was sure that his prayer had been heard, and so, with the voice of authority, he called upon Tabitha to arise; and she immediately opened her eyes, and when Peter offered his assistance, she sat up, and was presented to the assembled saints and widows alive. The miracle had a profound effect upon the people of the area, and many believed on the Lord. Peter extended his visit there, in the home of Simon a tan-

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

In what does practical religion consist?

What is religion by proxy and why isn't it acceptable to the Lord?

In what way has religion been used to hinder genuine service to God?

What does the apostle John teach with respect to one's obligation toward the needy?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstance did we come to have the words of the golden text?

In what kind of a poem is it found and who apparently composed it?

What is the value of the poem to people of this day?

What are some of the qualities which are found in a good wife?

Why is such a woman valued so highly?

What kind of influences does a good wife have on her entire household?

Peter at Lydda and a Case of Healing

What shape did Luke's historical record take at the time of this lesson?

What was the general condition of the church, following the conversion of Saul?

What are some of the facts regarding Lydda?

What factor contributed to the great success of Peter's ministry there?

Why were the apostles and others empowered to perform miracles at this time?

Where was Sharon and for what is it noted today?

The Death of Dorcas and the Call for Peter

What is the meaning of the name "Dorcas"?

What kind of a woman was she and what contributed to the charm of her good deeds?
 What motive prompted her benevolent activities?
 What can be said of many of the women whose names are found in the Scriptures?
 Name several of them and tell something of the contributions which they made for the good of others.
 What encouragement should all of this have for the Christian women of our day?
 Why is every person who is a Christian obligated to do something for the cause of Christ?
 What is the best way to get the Lord's people to engage in good works?

The Raising of Dorcas and the Effect on the People
 In what way is the situation which Luke records here related to our time?
 What makes the picture which he presents so graphic?
 Why did the disciples in Joppa want Peter to hasten to them?
 What lesson is there in this for our day?
 What did Peter do when he arrived at the place where the body of Dorcas was lying?
 What probably came into his mind at that time?
 Why did he engage in prayer?
 In what way did she respond to his call?
 What effect did this miracle have on the people of Joppa?
 Where did Peter lodge during his stay in the city?

Lesson IX—March 2, 1969

STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Lesson Text

Acts 6: 8-15; 7: 54-60

8 And Ste'-phen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people.

9 But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the *synagogue* of the Lib'-er-tines, and of the Cy-re'-ni-ans, and of the Al-ex-an'-dri-ans, and of them of Ci-li'-ci-a and A'-si-a, disputing with Ste'-phen.

10 And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.

11 Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Mo'-ses and against God.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law:

14 For we have heard him say, that this Je'-sus of Naz'-a-reth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Mo'-ses delivered unto us.

15 And all that sat in the council,

fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Je'-sus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord;

58 And they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 And they stoned Ste'-phen, calling upon *the Lord*, and saying, Lord Je'-sus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 6: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 6: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

February 24. M.....Stephen, a Man of Faith (Acts 6: 1-6)
 February 25. T.....Stephen, a Minister for Christ (Acts 6: 8-15)

February 26. W.....	Stephen's Defense (Acts 7: 1-16)
February 27. T.....	Stephen's Defense Continued (Acts 7: 17-34)
February 28. F.....	Stephen's Defense Concluded (Acts 7: 35-53)
March 1. S.....	Stephen Is Stoned to Death (Acts 7: 54-60)
March 2. S.....	Martyr's Reward (Rev. 7: 9-17)

TIME.—A.D. 31, 32.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Stephen, the Sanhedrin, and others.

Introduction

The Acts of the Apostles, by R. B. Rackham, has come from the press about fifteen times, since its initial publication in 1901; and it is one commentary on the Book of Acts which lists its two major parts, as follows: Part I (Chapters 1-12) The Acts of Peter; Part II (Chapters 13-28) The Acts of Paul. The First Part deals with "The Church of the Circumcision and Progress from Jerusalem to Antioch"; while the Second Part has to do with "The Church of the Uncircumcision and Progress from Antioch to Rome." This arrangement enables the student to have a panoramic view of the entire Book of Acts, and to see the action of the principal characters of the book, as they play their roles in the drama of the early church. The roll of the actors, listed in the Book of Acts, is a rather long one, and practically every one of them is worthy of careful consideration; but today we can deal with only one, namely, Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

Paul S. Rees has a book which he calls *Men of Action in the Book of Acts*, and in it he lists and discusses the lives and works of six of the principal characters. And he says concerning Stephen, that he was a "man who lived at floodtide," and to justify his use of that expression, he calls attention to five expressions which Luke uses, in getting him before his readers. The five expressions are (1) full of the Spirit, (2) full of wisdom, (3) full of faith, (4) full of grace, and (5) full of power. As the reader of Acts can readily see, Stephen was not permitted to remain on the stage of action very long; but every person will have to admit that he lived well, during the time which was allotted. We have

every reason to think that he was faithful as a deacon, and we can see from the record that he lost no opportunity of defending the faith in combat with the enemies. His address, recorded in chapter 7, is the longest in the book. In his book, *Preaching Out of the Overflow*, William L. Stidger advised preachers not to leave the impression that they had only a little to say, but that if the time and occasion demanded it, they could go on and on. That reminds us of Stephen—he never ran out of something to say or do.

The man about whom we are studying today, was a man whose zeal literally ate him up. Our minds are so fixed on his martyrdom, that we almost forget that he was anything else but a martyr. No one, of course, should seek to take away anything from the glory of the death which Stephen experienced; but we should remember that it was his loyalty to Christ, and the gospel message, which led the way to his untimely passing. But, we hasten to ask, Was his death untimely? In his last public address before his crucifixion, Jesus said, "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." (John 12: 24.) Stephen was not content to serve tables alone, but ventured out into the arena of life, and became one of the most zealous, effective, and faithful preachers we know anything about. There was nothing about his life and work which was not commendable. His example has inspired countless thousands to be true to his trust in the service of the Lord.

The Golden Text

"And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit."

The preceding verses of the chapter from which the words just quoted

are taken should be read, before proceeding further with this study. The occasion for selecting Stephen and the other six men listed was this: The church in Jerusalem had grown to many thousands of members, and a large number of them did not live in the city. They had come there for the feast of Pentecost, and expected to return to their homes after it was over. But there was something greater than Pentecost which claimed their attention: the long-expected Messiah had come, and they had heard and obeyed his gospel message, and were thereby made members of his body or church. They were young in the faith, and were, in the providence of God, detained in the city, until they were sufficiently grounded in the faith to insure their continued loyalty to the Lord, when they were in less favorable circumstances.

It is easy to see how the resources of many of the brethren would gradually become depleted, as they continued in the city, away from their homes; and it probably was not long before those who had the means, or who had some way of obtaining the means, would have to take steps to provide for those who were in need. This, apparently, was done before any great suffering on the part of the brethren was experienced; but a situation, at the time of this lesson, developed which required that something be done at once, to prevent the unity of the church from being disrupted. After due consultation, the apostles suggested a plan for meeting the threatened crisis, before any serious

damage was done; and the result was that the seven men named in the text, including Stephen were chosen to serve tables, while the apostles themselves continued "steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word."

We have no way of knowing whether or not Stephen gave his entire time to serving tables in the Jerusalem church, and if so how long; but we do know that as he continued his labors for Christ, his forensic ability brought him in contact with many leaders of his day, who were opposed to the cause of Christ. And it is altogether probable that among the number with whom he debated in the synagogues of the city, was Saul of Tarsus. As we stand in the blaze of Stephen's glory, as his life was being taken from him, we see a young man at whose feet the garments of the murderers were laid, and who was consenting unto the death of the man of God (Acts 8: 1); and we know from the record that that young man was destined to become the greatest single force for the furtherance of the cause of Christ here on earth, namely, the great apostle to the Gentiles, Paul. We have no way of knowing what thoughts passed through the mind of Saul, as he watched the persecuted man die for Christ; but we do know that it made a lasting impression upon him. (Cf. Acts 22: 17-21; 26: 10.) It may well have been that Stephen's life, in the providence of God, was given for that of Paul; and if so, it is certain that Stephen lost nothing in the transaction, as we shall see further on in this study.

The Text Explained

The Ministry of Stephen

(Acts 6: 8-10)

And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.

Stephen was a Grecian Jew, also called a Hellenist, which means that his home was outside Palestine, and

that he had acquired Greek culture and spoke the Greek language. The Jews whose home was in Palestine, and who adhered to the customs and language of their fathers, were called Hebrews; and it should be remembered that the situation which called for the appointment of the seven to serve tables, was the "murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." And as one surveys the growth of the church for the next generation, he will be able to see an almost continuous difference in viewpoint between the two segments

of the Jewish population, who responded to the gospel plan of salvation. This, however, was nothing unusual; for when two groups of people have different backgrounds, and different outlooks, they are bound to think in different directions. This problem besets the church today, and it can be solved only by following Paul's admonition in I Corinthians 1: 10.

Rackham, in commenting on this section of the lesson text, notes that Stephen was "a new man," perhaps not a member of the original body of disciples, but a Hellenist; and in this fact, according to this commentator, lies the whole secret. Rackham continues: "As soon as the church reaches the broader field of Hellenism, then struggle and advance begin. With the wider experience and broader training of a Hellenist, Stephen was able to look on 'the faith' (verse 7) in its wider bearings, in its relation to the world at large. So he perceived, and evidently was the first to perceive clearly, the incidental and temporary character of the Mosaic law with the temple and all its worship. This was the fruitful germ of doctrine which Paul was afterwards to carry out to its full logical and far-reaching consequence, viz., the perfect equality of Jew and Gentile in the church of God. This it was which aroused first against Stephen the hostility of his fellow Hellenists, and afterwards against Paul not merely the implacable hatred of his fellow countrymen, but bitter opposition among his fellow churchmen."

When people of ability, both natural and acquired, become devoted servants of the Lord, they will soon find themselves engaging in every effort, of which they are capable, in furthering the cause of Christ here among men. That was true of Stephen. He evidently left the tables, at least temporarily, and devoted himself to the proclamation of the gospel. The Spirit enabled him to perform miracles (cf. I Cor. 12: 11), for the purpose of confirming the word which he and others were preaching (cf. Mark 16: 17-20); and the progress of the word soon stirred up the opposition. We do not have the names of the men who disputed with Stephen; but from the facts which we have regarding

Paul, already referred to, it is entirely probable that he was among the number. The immediate result of the contest was the inflammation of the rage of the opposition; but it is altogether probable, as Taylor notes that the truths which Saul heard from the lips of Stephen became the germs, much of which was later developed, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, into the epistles of Paul, with which we are now so familiar.

The Gathering Storm

(Acts 6: 11-15)

Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, and set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

It is well to note the contrast between the spirits, which characterized the opposing sides of this controversy. We have already seen that the text (verse 10) says that the men who argued with Stephen were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. (Cf. I Cor. 2: 6-10.) If the people who heard that which Stephen said had had the proper attitude of mind, the results would have been entirely different. (See Acts 17: 1-12.) But with hostility toward truths which they could neither deny nor refute, they were totally unwilling to consider calmly the fact that they themselves might be in error. An inflamed mind, and a raging heart, will completely unfit any person, either to learn the truth, or to hold to it after he has seen it; and they will in the end injure him who permits them to characterize him.

When men whose chief purpose is to "win their point," and to maintain the *status quo*, are defeated in debate, their usual course is to try

to destroy the influence of their opponent, if not actually the man himself. This was true in the case of Stephen, as it had been in the case of Jesus; and in both cases the result was the death of the men in question. But that was as far as the religious bigots could go. (Cf. Luke 12: 1-5.) The enemies of Jesus could not destroy his influence, but they did accelerate it; and, in the case of Stephen, the blood of the martyr became the seed of the kingdom. (Acts 8: 1-4; 11: 19-26.)

If one wonders about the features of Stephen, as he stood before the Sanhedrin, that is, the Supreme Court of the Jewish people, let him remember that which has already been said about his character; and then consider the fact that Stephen knew that he was standing where Jesus stood, and fully understood that the judges were not there to try him, but to condemn him. Stephen also was aware of the fact that the supreme hour of his life had come; and as he surveyed the panorama which was unrolled before him, he could not but be illuminated by the glory of Jesus, toward whose face he was turned. The personality which shines the brightest is never self-originated; the best absorbers are always the best reflectors. Stephen was the channel of the glory which was seen in his face, and not the source of it.

Rage and Martyrdom

(Acts 7: 54-60)

Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice,

Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The things which the Sanhedrin heard, and which so enraged them, were the things which Stephen spoke, as he concluded his address to them. After reviewing the history of Israel, and showing that their fathers had consistently rejected God's plans and purposes for them, Stephen closed his address with these words: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not." (Acts 7: 51-53.)

Luke, in saying that the members of the Sanhedrin were "cut to the heart," means that they had inwardly felt the effects of the charge which Stephen had leveled against them. Taylor says that Stephen had touched the sore spot of their consciences with the smarting acid of his searching speech; while Robertson likens the address to the sending of a saw through the hearts of the Pharisees, which rasped them to the bone. The men to whom Stephen spoke were cut to the quick, or, to drop the figure, they were infuriated, exasperated. The original word for "they were cut" (*diaprio*) occurs only here and in Acts 5: 33. There is a different word in Acts 2: 37. In saying that "they gnashed on him with their teeth," the meaning is that they rushed at him like a pack of hungry, snarling wolves—a sign of violent rage. This was the end of all pretense of judicial soberness.

The vision which Stephen was permitted to behold, was evidently vouchsafed to him, for the purpose of encouraging him in the most critical experience of his life. He knew that his earthly sojourn was about over, and he was allowed to see the place of his final abode. Jesus was represented as "standing," as if to welcome the first of his disciples, who was giving his life for his cause; and this record has been preserved for the instruction and com-

fort of all others who are called upon to make the supreme sacrifice.

The reaction of the judges to the description which Stephen gave of his vision, was a strange way for the Supreme Court of the Jewish people to break up; and even if the members of the council sought to justify their loud crying and the stopping of their ears, on the ground that they did not want to hear any more "blasphemous" words from the man who stood before them, the manner in which they conducted themselves was wholly unbecoming to men who posed as judges. The least that can be said of them, is that they completely lost control of themselves.

Halford E. Luccock notes that the action of the hostile crowd, after Stephen's address, followed a pattern which has been and is endlessly repeated. Such people close the avenue through which new information might have reached them; and take refuge in "rushing." People of this type cease to think, and are motivated by hate; or to express the same thing in another way, they permit physical action, directed by prejudice and self-interest, to take the place of thinking and learning. *Rushing* is always easier than keeping the ears open, so that the mind may receive data for positive and constructive thinking. It is easy for us to look back and criticize the Jewish leaders; but it would be much better for us to ask, What is our most characteristic reaction to new and disturbing ideas? Do we keep our voices still, and our ears open for additional information; or do we "rush"? (The *Acts of the Apostles in Present-Day Preaching*, p. 127.)

The name "Saul" appears in the New Testament, at this point, for the first time, that is, the man who later became the apostle Paul; but he never would have become an apostle, if he had been unwilling to listen (Cf. Acts 22: 1-16.) There are some people who are wont to question the accuracy of the record of the stoning of Stephen by the Jews, on the ground that they had no right to inflict capital punishment. That prerogative, they aver, was reserved for the Romans. Mobs in this country do not have the right to inflict capital punishment, either; but that fact does not prevent lynch-

ings and murders by mob-violence, when such people decide that they should be committed. Some Bible students are of the opinion that the incident, we are now considering, took place between the recall of Pilate, and the appointment of his successor; but even if that is true, it is easy to see that the Sanhedrin was motivated by the mob-spirit, in their action toward Stephen.

Not only did Stephen imitate Jesus, in praying for his enemies and murderers; it is also evident that he, by addressing his words to Jesus, recognized him as being a divine personality. He requested from the Son precisely that which Jesus requested from the Father. (Luke 23: 34.) His prayer amid the angry shouts, and the crushing stones, made a profound impression upon Saul, as has already been noted; and very probably on many more, who witnessed that cruel murder on that day, and who heard and saw the manner in which Stephen reacted to those who were so cruelly misrepresenting him, and depriving him of his life.

The idea of death as a sleep, advanced by Jesus and the New Testament writers, particularly Paul (cf. John 11: 11; 1 Thess. 4: 13-15), introduced into Christian thinking a new concept of man's demise. Our word "cemetery" is, in fact, from the same original root—the sleeping place of the dead; and, as used in the text now before us, it is "a picture word of rest and calmness which stands in dramatic contrast to the rage and violence of the scene." (See Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament, in loco.*) Vincents comments on the subjects as follows:

"And thus, in Christian speech and thought, as the doctrine of the resurrection struck its roots deeper, the word *dead*, with its hopeless finality, gave place to the more gracious and hopeful word *sleep*. The pagan burying-place carried in its name no suggestion of hope or comfort. It was a *burying-place*, a *hiding-place*, a *monumentum*, a mere *memorial* of something gone; a *columbarium*, or dove-cot, with its little pigeon-holes for cinerary urns; but the Christian thought of death as sleep, brought with it into Christian speech the kindred thought of a

chamber of rest, and embodied it in the word *cemetery* (*koimētērion*)—the place to lie down to sleep." (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 486.)

Stephen stood the supreme test which can be applied to any life. He was "faithful unto death." We do not know whether or not Stephen realized the full significance of his sacrifice, with reference to the future of Christianity; but there is one thing of which we may be cer-

tain, namely, that a great crisis had come and gone; and that the first martyr was more than conqueror through him that loved him. And so, in the words of Alexander Pope,

The world recedes; it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend your wings! I mount!
I fly!
O Grave! where is thy victory?
O Death! where is thy sting?

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What is the value of a clear analysis of a book in the Bible for study purposes?
Discuss such an analysis, as it respects the Book of Acts.
What are the principal characteristics in the life of Stephen, as given by Luke?
What kind of life did he live?
Why did he meet with so much opposition from his fellow Hellenists?

The Golden Text

To what was Stephen chosen and what was the occasion for it?
Why would such a need for material assistance arise in the early church?
Why would Stephen want to preach the gospel, in addition to serving tables?
Do you know of any reason for thinking that Stephen may have come in direct contact with Saul of Tarsus, and if so, what is the reason?

The Ministry of Stephen

What kind of a Jew was Stephen?
What was the difference between a Grecian Jew and a Hebrew?
Why was there so much misunderstanding between the two groups of Jewish Christians?
What circumstance brought Stephen directly into the fray?

The Gathering Storm

In what way did Stephen differ from his opponents in their controversies?
What were the chief characteristics which were manifested on each side?
What are some of the effects such attitudes have on those who display them?
Why did Stephen's face resemble the face of an angel, as he stood before the Sanhedrin?

Rage and Martyrdom

Why was Stephen brought before the Jewish Supreme Court?
What did he say which enraged the members of the Sanhedrin?
What does Luke mean by saying that they were cut to the heart?
What, then, did the members of the court do?
Why would they act as they did?
What vision was Stephen permitted to see and the probable reason for it?
After the judges lost control of themselves, what attitude did they display toward Stephen?
What is meant by "rushing" and why do some people resort to it?
What harm is there in "rushing"?
What attitude did Stephen display while he was being stoned to death?
What idea of "death" has been introduced into Christian thinking?
What effect did the martyrdom of Stephen have on Saul?

Lesson X—March 9, 1969

TIMOTHY, A GOOD MINISTER

Lesson Text

Acts 16: 1-3; 2 Tim. 1: 1-6; Phil. 2: 19-22

1 And he came also to Der'-be and Lys'-tra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Tim'-o-thy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek.

2 The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lys'-tra and I-co'-ni-um.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that

were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Je'-sus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Je'-sus,

2 To Tim'-o-thy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Je'-sus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from

my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day

4 Longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lo'-is, and thy mother Eu-ni'-ce; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.

6 For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the

gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.

19 But I hope in the Lord Je'-sus to send Tim'-o-ty shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

20 For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state.

21 For they all seek their own, not the things of Je'-sus Christ.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child *serveth* a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*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.—2 Tim. 4: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

March 3. M.....	Timothy's Early Training (2 Tim. 1: 1-8)
March 4. T.....	Timothy's Call to Service (Acts 16: 1-5)
March 5. W.....	Timothy, a Worthy Servant (Phil. 2: 19-22)
March 6. T.....	Timothy in Berea (Acts 17: 10-15)
March 7. F.....	Timothy in Ephesus (Acts 19: 21, 22)
March 8. S.....	Timothy Charged (2 Tim. 4: 1-5)
March 9. S.....	Timothy Instructed by Paul (1 Tim. 4: 6-16)

TIME.—A.D. 50-68.

Places.—Lystra, Rome, Philippi, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul, Timothy, and others.

Introduction

The Greater Men and Women of the Bible says that among the friends of Paul, there is no one who appeals more to our interests and sympathies than Timothy. Not only was he associated with the apostle during a longer period, than any of his other companions; he apparently was regarded with an altogether peculiar affection and esteem. If he had followed the example of John, Timothy might have called himself “the disciple whom Paul loved”; for the great apostle to the Gentiles never spoke of any of his companions and fellow-workers in more glowing terms, than he did of Timothy, as we shall see further on in this study. It is easy to see from Paul's writings that Timothy shared both his spiritual father's outward labors and inward thoughts. He was with Paul when the apostle could not, or would not, have the companionship of others. Timothy was sent on some of the most delicate missions, and was given places of great responsibility with some of the most important congregations of the Lord's people of that day.

When Paul was in his last, and evidently his most lonely, imprisonment, it was Timothy whom he summoned to console him, and to receive his last instructions. Everything therefore which we can learn regarding Timothy is significant for the light it throws upon the characters of both the teacher and the pupil.

It appears that Timothy's home was in Lystra, or possibly in Derbe; and since Paul found him to be a fairly well developed young man in the principles of Christianity, when he visited those cities, as he was beginning his second great missionary journey; and when we add to this the fact that Paul frequently referred to Timothy as his son in the gospel, it is almost certain that Timothy, along with his mother and grandmother, was converted during the previous missionary journey, which was made by Paul and Barnabas. In his final letter to Timothy, Paul says, “But thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings;

what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: and out of them all the Lord delivered me." (2 Tim. 3: 10, 11.) The passage just quoted strongly implies that Timothy may have been an actual witness to the stoning of Paul at Lystra. (Acts 14: 19, 20.)

We learn from Paul's last letter to Timothy, that the latter owed his early training, and the molding of his character, to his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois; and in that same letter the apostle makes mention of his part in the spiritual instruction of his son in the faith, along with that of his mother and grandmother. "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3: 14, 15.) There was therefore never a time in Timothy's conscious experience, when the majestic words of the law, the songs of the psalmists, and the preaching of the prophets, were not familiar to his ear. The Old Testament Scriptures were no less a part of the growing boy's life, than the sky which was above him, or the ground upon which he lived.

Timothy was as much in touch with the living word of God, as with nature, even before his growing mind had learned to harmonize the messages which fell upon his attentive ear. (Cf. Psalm 19: 1-14.) The young child looked up into the faces of those godly mothers who had taught him, and lo! the words of the Sacred Writings on the lips of believing parents became, as in their wont, a manifestation of the love of God, and the faith of Eunice and Lois, as they passed through an open door into the heart of the little child. It would be a wonderful thing, if parents today could always be made to realize the importance of teaching the word of God to their little children; for then it would be much easier for them to learn the truth more fully from godly teachers, when they grow up. It appears certain that Paul had no difficulty in teaching Timothy, when the latter came under his influence. (Cf. Eph. 6: 1-4; Col. 3: 21.) In the words of Tennyson,

Happy he
With such a mother! faith in wom-
-ankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all
things high
Comes easy to him, and though he
trip and fall,
He shall not blind his soul with
clay.

—From the Princess.

The Golden Text

"Be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity." The entire chapter from which this text is taken is taken up with a discussion of the problem of false teaching, known as spurious asceticism, together with the proper method of combating it. The whole chapter may be divided into two parts, namely, (1) the false teaching more clearly defined as spurious asceticism (1-5); and (2) the proper method of combating this spurious asceticism (6-16.) The second part is also divided into two subdivisions, which have to do with the preacher himself, in his fight against the false doctrine already referred to, namely, (1) the teacher's own personal example of genuine holiness (6-10); and (2) his faithful ministry (11-16.) The words of the

golden text are taken from that part which deals with the ministry of the preacher, and the full context is as follows:

"These things command and teach. 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. Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Be diligent in all things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4: 11-16.)

Paul's purpose in writing First

Timothy is clearly stated in the first part of the epistle, namely, "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 genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith; so do I now." (1 Tim. 1: 3, 4.) Timothy, at the time of this lesson, was a relatively young man, probably younger than the false teachers in question. It was necessary there-

fore in rebuking older people, and especially teachers in the church, that he conduct himself so as to have the respect of those involved. (Cf. Tit. 2: 7, 8, 15; 1 Cor. 16: 10, 11.) And 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 that is what Paul urged Timothy to do, as set forth in the words of the golden text. This, as Alford suggests, indicates simplicity of holy motives, followed out in consistency of holy action.

The Text Explained

Timothy Chosen for Gospel Service

(Acts 16: 1-3)

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

If the closing paragraph of the preceding chapter is read, it will be seen that Paul, along with his newly chosen co-worker, was beginning his second great missionary journey. They left Antioch, in Syria, as he and Barnabas had done on the first journey; but Paul and Silas went in another direction. After passing through Syria and Cilicia, "confirming the churches," they came to the last cities which Paul and Barnabas had visited on their first journey. Silas was Paul's travelling companion, but Luke wrote as if Paul was travelling alone. It is reasonable to suppose that Paul was glad to see his home city of Tarsus, as they passed through Cilicia; but there is no mention made of it. It is quite possible that Paul preached in Tarsus and other Cilician cities, when the Jerusalem brethren sent him to Tarsus (Acts 9: 30; cf. 11: 25); and it is altogether possible that some of the churches which he and Silas confirmed in Cilicia, were established by him during his stay in his homeland.

When Paul and Silas left Tarsus,

their journey took them across the Taurus mountains, by the Cilician gates, through which Alexander once passed. It probably took them four or five days to go from there to Derbe. Luke does not say anything about the stay of Paul and Silas in that city, before going on to Lystra. It was apparently in the latter city that Paul found Timothy; and since his Christian reputation was so good, the apostle wanted him to accompany him and Silas, probably to take the place which was filled by John Mark on the first journey. This is a good place to say that when a young man prepares himself for Christian service, there will always be a place for him to fill. There is, however, no indication that Timothy, in making that preparation, was doing anything more than that which he considered to be his Christian duty. But while doing that, he was improving his talents, and was ready for greater service when the call came.

Years later, when Paul addressed a letter to Timothy, he had this to say: "This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee" (1 Tim. 1: 18); and it is quite possible that Timothy was singled out for the work we are now considering, by the prophetic utterances of Silas, (cf. Acts 15: 32.) At any rate, it is certain that no mistake was made in selecting Timothy; for it appears that he was always faithful to whatever work he was called upon to perform. This should be an impressive lesson to all young people, who are entrusted with responsibilities in Christian service. No man or woman will

ever regret having done that which was expected of him or her.

Paul's plan, as he engaged in missionary activities, was to preach to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles; and it appears that he fully realized that the presence of Timothy, a half-Jew by birth and uncircumcised, would constitute an insurmountable barrier to success in reaching any of his Jewish brethren with the gospel message, unless the young man was circumcised. Paul, accordingly, "took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek."

Paul could circumcise Timothy as a family mark, because of his Jewish background; but when it came to circumcising Titus, who was a Greek, the apostle flatly refused to yield to the desires of the Judaizers, because of the principle which was involved. (Gal. 2: 3-5.) Circumcision, so far as the Jews were concerned, was of the fathers before it was ordained by Moses, and a descendant of Abraham through Jacob, therefore, could be circumcised without necessarily being obligated to keep the law of Moses (see John 7: 22-24); but that was not possible in the case of a Gentile. (Gal. 5: 2-4.) The churches of Galatia, it appears, were largely, if not altogether, Gentile.

It seems fair to assume that Timothy received some kind of spiritual gift, probably at the time of this lesson (cf. 1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 6-14); and it may have been from this time, and onward, that he was known as an evangelist (2 Tim. 4: 5). Thus Timothy became a loyal companion, as he served with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel. He was active in preaching, represented the apostle in some special assignments, and joined with him in sending several of the epistles, which have come down to us. Timothy was indeed a useful man in the service of Christ.

Timothy's Fitness for the Ministry

(2 Tim. 1: 1-6)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace,

from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

One might wonder why Paul would address himself so formally to his son in the gospel, but if he will keep in mind the nature and purpose of the letter now before us, it will not be difficult to see at least some reason for it. Paul was in his last imprisonment, and was soon to leave his son in the faith in an unfriendly world. He was charging the younger man to carry on the work which the older man had been doing (cf. 2 Tim. 2: 2), so far as gospel preaching was concerned; and the letters which Paul had sent, and was sending, to Timothy would serve as authoritative documents, to the effect that the latter had divine approval for his work. Paul's place in the economy of God had long since been established, and Timothy now had authority to continue the work which had been committed to him. It is interesting to note that Paul, throughout the letters to Timothy and Titus, never uses the terms "Jesus" or "Christ" alone, with a single exception in 1 Timothy 5: 11, where Christ is found without the name "Jesus."

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother, Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded, in thee also. For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.

It is interesting to observe how Paul remembered what he owed to the faith of his forefathers; and then went on to remind Timothy that he, too, was indebted to the faith of his mother and grandmother. Paul's reference to his forefathers implies that his God-fearing life was the result of the training and example which his fathers had given him. The thought which the apostle expresses here should make a deep impression on all parents, and especially those who are Christians. The future of the children is, to a large extent, in the

hands of their parents; and the latter will certainly be held responsible for the manner in which they treat their opportunities. Paul always maintained a good conscience (Acts 23: 1; 24: 16); and that was largely due, let it be repeated, to the blessings which he received from those who went before him.

It was characteristic of Paul to pray for his brethren (Rom. 1: 8-10; Eph. 1: 15, 16; Phil. 1: 3-11; 1 Thess. 1: 2, 3; Phile. 4-6); and it is interesting to note that in each of the cases cited, including the one we are now considering, direct mention is made of the faith of those for whom the prayers were offered, except in the case of the Philippians, and it is implied there. The close attachment which Paul and Timothy had for each other, along with the devotion which the latter demonstrated for the cause of Christ, would lead the apostle to maintain an unusual interest in his son in the gospel. Timothy, apparently, was naturally timid; and when Paul recalled the tears which he had seen his child in the Lord shed, he could not help but remember him before the throne of grace. The tears of Timothy had touched Paul deeply, and had increased the tender feeling which he had for him; and he continually longed to see him, for he knew that such an experience would fill him with great joy.

But it was evidently Timothy's faith which was uppermost in the mind of Paul, as he wrote these words, that is, the faith which had made the younger man such a devoted servant of God. It should be emphasized again, however, that the faith which Timothy had did not come to him without effort; it was deep-rooted, and it owed much of its stability to maternal training and example. *The New English Bible* renders the passage which we are now considering in these words: "I am reminded of the sincerity of your faith, a faith which was alive in Lois your grandmother and Eunice your mother before you, and which, I am confident, lives in you also." Such faith can come to one only by diligent teaching, and steadfast devotion to the truth. It is therefore no wonder that Paul said to Timothy, "But abide thou in the

things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3: 14, 15.)

We are not specifically told what the gift of God was, which Timothy had, and which he was exhorted to stir up; but when this passage is read in the light of other references to Timothy's work, it appears that Paul had in mind that which was received by his son in the gospel, when the latter was set apart to the work of an evangelist. (Cf. 1 Tim. 1: 18; 4: 14.) It was the voice of prophecy which led the way to Timothy, that is, which pointed him out as a person suitable for the work of an evangelist. If there was some miraculous power given to Timothy, it was, of course, limited to the age of miracles. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-13.) It should be observed that God bestowed the gift, but human effort was required to keep it alive.

Timothy As Paul's Messenger

(Phil. 2: 19-22)

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel.

When Paul wrote the epistle from which this section of the lesson text is taken, he was apparently nearing the end of his first Roman imprisonment. Earlier, during that period of confinement, he had written other epistles, namely, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians. Paul was in prisons frequently (2 Cor. 11: 23), and that meant that he had to depend upon trusted assistants to keep him in contact with the churches in which he was especially interested. It appears that the church in Philippi was the closest to his heart. This church, which was founded by him (Acts 16: 11ff), had from the beginning been interested in his

work, and had aided him in his missionary activities (Phil. 4: 15, 16; cf. 2 Cor. 11: 8, 9), had sent Epaphroditus with a gift to his prison house in Rome (Phil. 4: 18), and had no doubt showed their love to him in other ways. This was the kind of background against which Paul wrote to the Philippian brethren, and why he was interested in hearing that they were continuing their growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Timothy was the man whom Paul decided to send to Philippi, for the purpose of learning about the brethren there; and when he said in his letter that he had no other person suited for that work, because they all sought their own things rather than those of Jesus Christ, he was not making a sweeping indictment against his fellowworkers in general. Instead, he apparently was saying that Timothy was the only one available, whom he could send to them in complete confidence. The marginal reading for "truly" is *genuinely*. The original word from which it is translated appears nowhere else in the New Testament. The adverb is derived from an adjective which means born in wed-

lock, that is, a legitimate birth, or, as we would say, "like a brother."

The idea which Paul was endeavoring to convey to the Philippian brethren, was that Timothy realized his relationship to the Lord, and to them; and that he had a brother's interest in them. When the apostle said that they knew "the *proof* of him," he was saying that they were aware of the fact that Timothy had been thoroughly tested. The probable reference was to the time when the younger man was in Philippi with Paul, during their first visit there (Acts 16: 11-40), when they had the opportunity of observing him closely, especially with reference to his devotion to the Lord, as he served with his father in furthering the gospel, and his reaction to persecution. They also probably knew of his continued service, through the years, and that he was also faithful and trustworthy. It is a wonderful thing for a person, and especially a young person, to conduct himself in such a way, that they who are associated with him, or know about him, can have the utmost confidence in him; and that they can know that he has a genuine interest in them.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What are some of the reasons why Paul loved Timothy so dearly?
Where did Timothy live and what is known of his conversion and early Christian life?
What is the value of proper parental training?
Why could Eunice and Lois do so much for Timothy?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Paul write the words of the golden text?
In what did the ministry of Timothy consist?
How much of that is essential to an acceptable ministry today? Why?
How can a young preacher best conduct himself before his elders?

Timothy Chosen for Gospel Service

How did Paul happen to come to Derbe and Lystra at this time?
What route did they probably travel over in going from Antioch to Lystra?
How did Paul come to have Silas as his travelling companion?
How did they come to choose Timothy to work with them and what were his probable duties?

What lesson should we learn from the preparation which Timothy had made?
Why did Paul circumcise Timothy but refuse to allow Titus to be circumcised?

Timothy's Fitness for the Ministry

What probable reason did Paul have for addressing himself formally to Timothy?
Why would Timothy need to be armed with authority in his work?
What attitude did Paul have toward the faith of his fathers?
Why could he always have a good conscience toward God and man?
What great lesson should we learn from Paul in this respect?
Why did Paul pray so often for so many people?
Why is one's faith so important?
How did he feel toward Timothy and why?
What gift from God did Timothy apparently have?
What human responsibility must be assumed with reference to our blessings from God?

Timothy as Paul's Messenger

When and under what circumstances did Paul write the letter to the Philippians?
How did he keep in touch with the churches during his imprisonments?
Why did Paul feel as he did toward the Philippian brethren?
Why was Timothy selected as the messenger of Paul to the Philippians?
Did the apostle mean to say that no one

else was fitted for that mission? Give reason for your answer.
 What kind of attitude did Timothy have toward those brethren?

What "proof" of Timothy did Paul say the Philippians knew?
 What is always the best way for a young preacher to conduct himself?

Lesson XI—March 16, 1969

LUKE, THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN

Lesson Text

Luke 1: 1-4; Acts 1: 1; Col. 4: 14-17; 2 Tim. 4: 11

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word,

3 It seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophili-lus;

4 That thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.

1 The former treatise I made, O Theophili-lus, concerning all that

Je'-sus began both to do and to teach,

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and De'-mas salute you.

15 Salute the brethren that are in La-od-i-ce'-a, and Nym'-phas, and the church that is in their house.

16 And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the La-od-i-ce'-ans; and that ye also read the epistle from La-od-i-ce'-a.

17 And say to Ar-chip'-pus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"A friend loveth at all times; and a brother is born for adversity."* (PROV. 17: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING—Acts 16: 16-18.

Daily Bible Readings

March 10. M.....	Luke, the Gospel Writer (Luke 1: 1-4)
March 11. T.....	Luke, Writer of Acts (Acts 1: 1-4)
March 12. W.....	Luke, Companion of Paul (Acts 16: 10-15)
March 13. T.....	Luke, the Physician (Col. 4: 10-18)
March 14. F.....	Luke, Paul's Fellow Worker (Phile. 21-24)
March 15. S.....	Luke, a Dependable Friend (2 Tim. 4: 1-11)
March 16. S.....	Luke with Paul in Troas (Acts 20: 7-12)

TIME.—A.D. 60-68.

PLACE.—**Rome.**

PERSONS.—Paul, Luke, Theophilus, and others.

Introduction

It is generally thought by Bible students that Luke was a Greek; and if this is true, then he was the only Gentile writer of the New Testament. While there is no direct evidence on the subject, it is also thought by many Bible students that Luke and Titus were brothers; and that their home was probably in Antioch of Syria. The earliest chronological reference we have to Titus, in the New Testament, was

his going from Antioch to Jerusalem, in company with Paul and Barnabas, for the conference regarding the Gentile Christians. (Act 15: 1, 2; Gal. 2: 1-3.) This fact, along with some information contained in Eusebius, has led many to think that Luke and Titus were natives of the Syrian city, which placed such an important role in the missionary work of the early church. It is a significant fact that neither the

name of Luke nor Titus is mentioned in the Book of Acts, although both men were prominent in the work of the Lord, during the time which is covered in that historical document. That, however, is usually explained by suggesting that Luke, as John did later, omitted any personal reference by name in his writings, either to himself or to his family.

Practically all Bible students are united in thinking that Luke wrote both the gospel record which bears his name and the Book of Acts; and from the abrupt manner in which the latter book ends, it is also thought that the sacred historian had planned to write a third volume, in his historical set, which would cover a later period of church history. If such a volume was ever written, we have no record of it. Some one has very aptly referred to Luke's two-volume historical record as a "treatise on the origin of Christianity and its spread from Jerusalem to Rome." It is easy to see, from the information contained in the New Testament regarding Luke, that he was an educated physician, and a dedicated follower of Christ. While we must consider his writings which have come down to us as being inspired, that is, as being written under the supervision of the Holy Spirit, it is also true that he made a thorough investigation of all the pertinent facts, before he recorded them, as may be seen by reading his preface to the Book of Luke.

The New Bible Dictionary, in speaking of the character and ability of Luke as a writer, notes that from the contents of the two books which we have from his pen, we have come to know the author in a very intimate way. He was a humble and disciplined writer, who always kept himself in the background, so that the full light which was available might fall on the great theme of his twofold history, namely, the glad tidings that Jesus Christ is both Lord and Saviour,

and that the victorious Redeemer chose, equipped, and used his apostles, and especially Paul, to proclaim the gospel throughout the then known world. It is clear from the literary style of Luke and Acts, and from the character of the contents of the two books, that Luke was thoroughly trained, both as a physician and as a writer. His qualities as one of the best and most reliable historians of antiquity are both recognized and admitted by most impartial scholars today.

Those who are willing to take the time, and to make the effort, to acquaint themselves with the terminology which Luke employs in his writings, will be impressed with the fact that he was skilled in many fields; and that his knowledge of material things covered a wide range. For example, Luke's exclusive narratives regarding the birth of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, are such as would interest a physician, to whom such personal disclosures would be made. (Cf. Luke 2: 19.) When Luke reported the healing of Peter's wife's mother, he said that she "was holden of a great fever." (Luke 4: 38; cf. Matt. 8: 14; Mark 1: 30.) Luke alone, of the gospel writers, reports the story of the good Samaritan, with its first-aid episode. (Luke 10: 25-37.) When reporting the Lord's teaching regarding the peril of riches, in which he said, "For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18: 25), Luke uses a different word for "needle," than the one employed by Matthew and Mark. Their word is *rhapsis*, whereas, Luke's term is *belonē*, which signifies a surgical needle. A. T. Robertson points out that the great detail and minute accuracy, with which Luke describes the voyage and shipwreck of Acts 27, throws more light upon ancient seafaring, than everything else put together.

The Golden Text

"A friend loveth at all times; and a brother is bom for adversity
This is one of the proverbs of Solomon, and is a sentence of ethical wisdom. The entire sentence is

constructed on the principle of "parallelism," which means that there is a balancing of thought against thought, clause against clause, etc. This is to say that the two parts of

the sentence now under consideration are synonymous, and express substantially the same idea. Or, to be more specific, the terms "friend" and "brother" are used interchangeably, and refer to the same person. Moffat renders the words of the golden text in these words, "A friend is always a friend, he is a born brother for adversity." A true friend is one who remains so, come what may; and when it comes to trouble, he is like a brother in his attachment and devotion.

Emerson says that "the only way to have a friend is to be one"; while Sir Walter Raleigh notes that "if thy friends be of better quality than thyself, thou mayest be sure of two things: the first, they will be more careful to keep thy counsel, because they have more to lose than thou hast; the second, they will esteem thee for thyself, and not for that which thou dost possess." Sir Walter continues with reference to true friendship: "Thou mayest be sure that he that will in private tell thee of thy faults, is thy friend, for he adventures thy dislike, and doth hazard thy hatred; there are few men that can endure it, every man for the most part delighting in self-praise, which is one of the most

universal follies that bewitcheth mankind."

Any one who has a friend has an incentive for living. This is true, because genuine friends have faith in us, even when we do not. And too, such friends will tell us the truth about ourselves, although we may not at the time appreciate their doing so. It is altogether possible that Paul's refusal to take Mark on his second missionary journey, was the thing which started that young man to thinking about himself, and eventually to seeing himself for what he really was. (Cf. Acts 15: 36-38; 2 Tim. 4: 11.) Robert Louis Stevenson said, "So long as we are loved by others, I would almost say that we are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend." And finally, in the words of John MacCunn, "Once any man has true friends, he never again frames his discussions, even those which are most secret, as if he were alone in the world. He frames them habitually in the imagined company of his friends. In their visionary presence he thinks and acts; and by them, as visionary tribunal, he feels himself, even in his unspoken intentions and inmost feelings, to be judged." (Cf. Heb. 4: 12, 13; Phile. 14.)

The Text Explained

The Historian and Gospel Narrator

(Luke 1: 1-4; Acts 1: 1)

Both of the books which are attributed to Luke, that is, his gospel record and Acts, were addressed to Theophilus. Bible students are not agreed as to the identity of this addressee, that is, they are not certain whether the term was used to conceal some well known individual, or whether it was the actual name of a real person. The latter idea is probably the true one; and the fact that Luke does not use the same phraseology in referring to him in Acts, which he does in Luke, has led some students to think that Theophilus was converted to Christianity, between the writings of the two books. If Theophilus was a real person, he must have been a Gentile, as his name indicates; and Luke, in the gospel record, was evidently trying to interest him in the religion of Christ. At any rate, no

one can read the two books, now before us, without being impressed with the fact that he is reading historical data, which never becomes dull and uninteresting.

Any one who is familiar with the writing of books, and especially sets of two or more volumes, is aware of the fact that the preface to the entire set is placed at the beginning of the first volume. This appears to have been the plan which was followed by Luke, in his two-volume history. The fact that Luke says that he made a thorough investigation of the subject-matter of his work, before putting it in writing, does not imply that he was critical of any others who may have written their narratives before he wrote his. Many Bible students are of the opinion that the Synoptic Gospels were written in this order, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, with John coming many years later. If that which

has just been said is true, then it would be a good practice to read the historical part of the New Testament in this order, namely, Mark, Matthew, Luke, Acts, and John. John is so different from the Synoptics, that it can well be read apart from the others.

Our aim in this lesson is to learn as much about Luke, as we can; and what better source do we have for our information, than the books which he wrote! Luke's name occurs only three times in the New Testament, and always in the writings of Paul—Philemon 24; Colossians 4: 14; and 2 Timothy 4: 11. Some one has referred to Luke as the poet-painter among the evangelists; and it is not surprising therefore that Renan, who was a good judge of style, calls his gospel record the most beautiful book in the world. Renan goes on to say, "There is scarcely an anecdote or a parable proper to Luke which does not breathe the spirit of mercy, and of appeal to sinners. The Gospel of Luke is especially the Gospel of pardon, and of pardon obtained by faith. 'There is more joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.' 'The Son of man is come not to destroy men, but to save them.' Any quantity of straining is lawful in him, if only he can make each incident of the gospel history a history of pardoned sinners. Samaritans, publicans, centurions, guilty women, benevolent pagans, all those whom Pharisaism despises, are his clients. The idea that Christianity has pardon for all the world is his alone. The door is open; conversion is possible to all.

"It is no longer a question of the law; a new devotion, the worship of Jesus, has replaced it. Here it is the Samaritan who does the good deed, whilst the priest and the Levite pass indifferent by. There a publican comes out of the temple justified by his humility, whilst the irreproachable but haughty Pharisee goes out more guilty than before. Elsewhere the sinful woman is raised by her love for Jesus, and is permitted to bestow on him particular marks of tenderness. Elsewhere, again, the publican Zacchaeus becomes at the

first onset a son of Abraham, by the simple fact of his having shown eagerness to see Jesus. Luke adds the taste for humility. 'That which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God.' The powerful shall be cast down from his throne, the humble shall be exalted; there, in brief, is the revolution wrought by Jesus. Now, the haughty is the Jew, proud of his descent from Abraham; the humble is the gentle man who draws no glory from his ancestors, and owes everything that he is to his faith in Jesus." And what more can be said of Acts!

The Beloved Physician

(Col. 4: 14-17)

Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you. Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in their house. And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

It has already been pointed out that it is clear from the opening words of both Luke and Acts, that the same person wrote them both; and it is practically the unanimous testimony of conservative scholars that the writer, as already noted, was Luke. Paul, who was very close to Luke, calls him the beloved physician; and the implied cordial relationship deserves some background consideration. It has already been observed that Luke's name is nowhere mentioned in the twofold record which he wrote; but that does not mean that he is not referred to in the history. If we grant that Luke wrote the Book of Acts, then it is certain that we can meet with him in that volume.

After Paul and Barnabas decided to go their separate ways, Luke devotes most of the remainder of the book to Paul. Silas began his work with Paul in chapter 16, and when the two missionaries reached Lystra, Timothy was added to the force. These three men made their way across the peninsula of Asia Minor, with frequent changes in their

course, induced by the Holy Spirit, until at length they reached the sea-coast city of Troas, in the northwest corner of the peninsula. Luke's record of this is as follows: "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia [that is, the westernmost province of Asia Minor]; and when they had come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them." (Acts 16: 6-10.)

It is in the passage just quoted that we are first introduced to the famous "we" references of the Book of Acts. The pronouns which refer to Paul and his company, up to verse 10, are in the third person; but beginning with that verse, the second person is used instead of the third, which implies that the writer had joined the party. If the writer was Luke, then he joined the missionary group at Troas, and continued with them as they journeyed to Philippi; and was with them for at least a part of the time they were in that city, as may be seen by reading Acts 16: 11-17. After Paul and Silas had been released from prison, following the conversion of the jailor, and had been asked by the authorities to leave the city, they were soon on their way; but it was "they" rather than "we," implying that Luke remained in that city.

Some years after that, as Paul was concluding his third missionary journey, and was passing through Philippi on his way to Jerusalem, Luke again joined him in that city. (Acts 20: 5, 6.)

If one will read the remainder of Acts 20 and the first seventeen verses of chapter 21, he will see that Luke went on with Paul to Jerusalem; and inasmuch as he also went with the apostle from Caesarea to Rome, it is most likely that he re-

mained with him during the two-year imprisonment in Caesarea. It is, in fact, not at all improbable that Luke gave up his medical practice in Philippi, in order to devote his time as the personal physician to the aged apostle (cf. Phile. 9), and writing the two books which are attributed to him. There are those who think that Luke gathered much of the material for these books during the two years in Caesarea.

No one can think of a better source for gathering the information which Luke needed for his twofold history, than he had while Paul was in prison; for the latter was unable to leave the place of his confinement, but his friends had easy access to him (Acts 24: 23.) Paul was certainly qualified to furnish much, if not all, of the information which his friend and physician needed; and it is quite possible that Luke wrote the first volume of his projected work, during the stay in Caesarea, or possibly after reaching Rome. We know that Acts was written after the gospel record (Acts 1: 2); and it is equally clear that Acts was finished before Paul's release from the Roman prison. (Acts 28: 30, 31.) Thus, as Luke ministered to the somewhat frail body of the imprisoned apostle, the latter was supplying his beloved physician with information which would lead to the spiritual healing of countless thousands of people; for he was telling his friend about the gospel of Christ, which is God's power unto salvation. (Rom. 1: 16, 17.)

The gospel apparently reached the area in which Colossae was located, during Paul's long stay in Ephesus (Acts 19: 8ff); but the letter in which the section of the lesson text we are now considering is found, was not written until Paul first Roman imprisonment. It was when the apostle was closing the letter to the Colossian brethren, that he told them that the beloved physician was sending them a word of greeting, along with some others. Paul also asked the Colossian brethren to see to it that the epistle, which he was sending to them, was read to others. Archippus was probably what we could call the "minister" in the church at Colossae. (Phile. 1, 2.)

The Friend to the End

(2 Tim. 4: 11)

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering.

It is interesting to note that a disciple named Demas is mentioned wherever the name of Luke occurs; and it is easy to think that he was both close to Paul and faithful to the Lord, when we first meet with him. If Paul's letter to Philemon was written before the one which he sent to the Colossian brethren, which is probably true; then it is easy to see something of the gradual defection of Demas, namely, (1) Philemon 24: Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers; (2) Colossians 4: 14: Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you; (3) 2 Timothy 4: 10: Demas forsook me, having loved this present world. At first, his name was mentioned before Luke, then after Luke, and finally as a deserter.

At the time Paul wrote his final letter, which has come down to us, he was a lonely prisoner, with only Luke with him; and, as already indicated, Luke was probably the apostle's private physician. The fact that he was *with* Paul, might suggest that, as a physician, he was permitted to minister to the prisoner's needs, so far as medical care was concerned. The desertion of Demas must have grieved Paul; but the fidelity of Luke was great encouragement to him. If Luke did give up his medical career in Philippi to become the personal physician, and a historical writer, and, in effect, the biographer of Paul, then it is easy to imagine the undying friendship which existed between

these two godly men. It also must have been a great source of comfort to Paul to be able to request that Timothy bring Mark with him; for the apostle needed his services, and Mark had been fully restored to his confidence. Demas was the man who deserted; but Mark was the man who came back!

No one knows for certain just what became of Luke, following the martyrdom of Paul. *The New Bible Dictionary* says that "according to the anti-Marcionite prologue to his Gospel, he continued to serve the Lord without the distraction of family responsibilities until he died in Boeotia in Greece at the age of 84. Through intimate contact over many years with Paul and many other Christian leaders (e. g. Philip, Timothy, Silas, Mark, Barnabas, James the brother of Jesus, etc.), and as a consequence of the fact that he was in Jerusalem (Acts 21: 17ff), Caesarea and other places intimately associated with Jesus and his first apostles, Luke had the very best opportunity to obtain first-hand knowledge regarding our Lord and the history of the earliest Christian Church. That he definitely and purposefully made full use of these opportunities is claimed by him in Luke X: 1-4, and is corroborated by the sterling quality and historical accuracy of both Luke and Acts." *The Interpreter's Bible* notes Luke was a cosmopolitan at home in his own Greek world, and also at home in the Jewish world, to which Paul introduced him. This great man is a shining example of the variety of gifts which can be used in the Lord's service, when they are dedicated to that cause.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Who was Luke and what is known of his early life?
What are some of the lasting contributions which he made to the cause of Christ?
What kind of preparation did he make for his historical writing?
What are some of the unique characteristics of his gospel narrative?

The Golden Text

What is the nature of the statement which serves as the golden text and who wrote it?

What is the relationship of the terms "friend" and "brother"? Why do you say so?

What are some of the values of true friendship?

Why does a friend have an incentive for living?

The Historian and Gospel Narrator

To whom did Luke address the books he wrote and what is known of him?

What was Luke's purpose in writing his twofold history of Christianity?

What is the probable order of the gospel narratives and where in the arrangement should Acts be read?

What is our central purpose in this lesson?

In what way has the Book of Luke appealed to men of letters?

The Beloved Physician

How do we know that the same person wrote Luke and Acts?

If Luke did write the Book of Acts, what relationship did he sustain toward Paul?

Trace the course of events in the second half of Acts to the time when Luke came in contact with Paul.

What is the significance of the "we" passages in the Book of Acts?

What indication do we have that Luke became Paul's personal physician?

When and under what circumstances did Luke probably gather the material for his historical works?

How do we know the approximate time of his completion of those books?

When did Paul send his letter to the Colossian brethren?

The Friend to the End

What other fellow Christian is always named in the New Testament along with Luke?

What is known of Demas?

What is probably implied by the fact that Luke alone was with Paul when the latter wrote his last letter?

Why would Luke be a great comfort to Paul at that time?

Why did Paul want Timothy to bring Mark to him and what is implied by the request?

What is known of Luke's last years?

What impression has he left on the pages of history?

Lesson XII—March 23, 1969

LYDIA, A BUSINESS WOMAN

Lesson Text

Acts 16: 11-15, 35-40

11 Setting sail therefore from Tro-as, we made a straight course to Sam'-o-thrace, and the day following to Ne-ap'-o-lis;

12 And from thence to Phi-lip'-pi, which is a city of Mac-e-do'-ni-a, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together.

14 And a certain woman named Lyd'-i-a, a seller of purple, of the city of Thy-a-ti'-ra, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

35 But when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the jailor reported the words to Paul, *saying*, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them. They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out.

38 And the serjeants reported these words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans;

39 And they came and besought them; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lyd'-i-a: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him."* (Psalm 25: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 1: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

March 17. M.....	Paul Comes to Philippi (Acts 16: 6-12)
March 18. T.....	Conversion of Lydia and Her House (Acts 16: 13-15)
March 19. W.....	Faithful Women in Philippi (Phil. 4: 1-7)
March 20. T.....	A Beloved Woman (Acts 9: 36-42)
March 21. F.....	Homemakers (Tit. 2: 1-8)

March 22. S.....Home Builders (Prov. 31: 23-31)
 March 23. S.....Putting God First (Phil. 3: 7-16)

TIME.—A.D. 50.

PLACE.—Philippi.

Persons.—Paul, Lydia, and others.

Introduction

By looking at the time of this lesson, it can be seen that the church of the Lord had been in existence about twenty years, when Paul and his company went to Philippi; and so far as is known, there had not, up to this time, been any effort to carry the gospel into Europe. It is possible, of course, that some of the people who were converted in Jerusalem, during the early days of the church, may have returned to their European homes, and preached the gospel in those areas; but there is no record of such activity. The lesson which we are studying today tells the story of the first work of that kind, which was done west of Asia; and so far as is known, Lydia was the first person to respond to the call of Christ in that part of the world. She was not a native of Europe, as we shall see further on in this study, but she apparently had the honor of becoming the first Christian, outside of the country in which the religion of Christ came into being.

In learning of the conversion of Lydia to Christianity, it will be to our advantage to look again at the reason for Paul and his company's going into Europe, which will require some repetition of last week's lesson; but repetition is one of the basic laws of learning. Some months earlier, following his disagreement with Barnabas regarding John Mark, Paul chose Silas as his co-laborer, and began his second great missionary journey. Barnabas and Mark set out over the same route which Barnabas and Paul took, as they left Antioch the first time; while Paul and Silas took the northwestern route, and went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. They then crossed the Taurus mountains, probably through the Cilician gates, and in due time came to Derbe (the farthest point eastward of the first journey) and then to Lystra. It was at the latter place, apparently, that they found Timothy; and after due

preparation, this young man became a member of the evangelistic party.

When Paul and his company left Lystra, they continued on their northwesterly journey, through the cities of the peninsular of Asia Minor; and wherever they had the opportunity they delivered the decrees, that is, the decisions, which the apostles and elders had made at the Jerusalem conference; with the result that the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily. The Holy Spirit forbade the missionaries to preach in the province of Asia, but they did go through the region of Phrygia and Galatia; and when they came over against Mysia, they made an effort to go into Bithynia; but when the Spirit of Jesus would not permit that, they passed by Mysia, and came down to the sea-coast city of Troas. It was there that Paul had the vision of a man of Macedonia calling for help; and when he related the matter to his companions, including Luke who joined the party in Troas, they all concluded that God was calling them to preach the gospel on the continent of Europe. (The map covering all of these movements should be carefully consulted.)

After receiving the information through the vision, the missionaries made immediate plans to cross the Ægean Sea, and in two days they landed in Neapolis, which was the seaport town of Philippi, some ten miles inland. The latter city was a Roman colony, which means that it enjoyed certain special privileges, and was responsible to Rome, rather than to the local governor. There appears to have been considerable wealth in Philippi, which made the city attractive for outside business interests to settle there; and that may have been the reason for Lydia's being there. And so, as was the case of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, God was bringing together preachers of the gospel, and those who would respond to its

message, when they learned its truth. There was, as we have already seen, miraculous intervention, with reference to Paul and his company; but the principle of bringing such people together is the same, whether with miraculous intervention, as in the early days of the

church, or with providential guidance, as in our day. The Lord is interested in the salvation of every person (cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9); and we may be sure that he is not idle with reference to his providential capabilities (cf. Matt. 28: 20b; Rom. 8: 28).

The Golden Text

"The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him." The passage just quoted is rendered by Moffatt in these words: "Those who revere the Eternal have his confidence; his compact is to instruct them." The term "compact" is apparently used in the sense of *agreement*, that is, to make an agreement, or an agreement between parties (see Webster); and with this idea in mind, the passage would read, "Those who revere the Eternal have his confidence; his agreement is to instruct them, or make known to them his will." The *King James Version* has it: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." The word in the text in which we are primarily interested in this study is "friendship," or, according to the *Authorized Version*, "secret." The idea which is expressed by the term, according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs (*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*) is that of intimacy, or familiar intercourse, such as belong to family life.

The section of the Psalm (verses 8-15) from which the golden text is taken is something of a description of Jehovah's ways with men; and it reads as follows: "Good and upright is Jehovah: therefore will he instruct sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in justice; and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of Jehovah are loving-kindness and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. For thy name's sake, O Jehovah, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great. What man is he that feareth Jehovah? him shall he instruct

in the way that he shall choose. His souls shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the land. The friendship | *counsel* or *secret*, margin! of Jehovah is with them that fear him; and he will show him his covenant. Mine eyes are ever toward Jehovah; for he will pluck my feet out of the net."

John Watson, also and widely known as Ian Maclaren, wrote a series of studies in which he gave sketches of Scottish life, beginning with *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush*. Taking a typically humble home of Scotland, with only two "sitting" rooms, one the parlor, where strangers were entertained, and the other the kitchen, which was the family living room, and into which intimate friends were taken, the author was able to use the two rooms in question to illustrate the meaning of the word now under consideration. The family, or familiar friend was invited into the family room; and that is the way it is with Jehovah and them that reverence and respect him. This intimate, or select, fellowship is, according to Spurgeon, a great secret. He continues: "Carnal minds cannot guess what is intended by it, and even believers cannot explain it in words, for it must be felt to be known. The higher spiritual life is necessarily a path which the eagle's eye hath not known, and which the lion's whelp has not travelled; neither natural wisdom nor strength can force a door into this inner chamber. Saints have the key of heaven's hieroglyphics; they can unriddle celestial enigmas. They are initiated into the fellowship of the skies: they have heard words which it is not possible for them to repeat to their fellows."

The Text Explained

The Arrival of Paul and His Company in Philippi
(Acts 16: 11-12)

Setting sail therefore from Troas,

we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia,

the first of the district, a Roman colony; and we were in the city tarrying certain days.

The term "therefore," in the first part of the passage just quoted, has reference to the situation out of which the resolution to go to Macedonia came, as set forth in the introductory remarks of the lesson. Luke's remarks about the voyage indicates that everything was favorable for its success. Samothrace was an island in the Aegean sea, about midway between Troas and Neapolis. At a later date (Acts 20: 6), it took Paul and his company five days to go from Philippi to Troas, which, of course, was the same distance, but going in the opposite direction; but the difference in time could have been caused by "contrary winds," or by delay in loading and unloading freight at Samothrace.

It is interesting to note the lesson which Paul drew from the idea of the "Roman colony," when he wrote his letter to the Philippian brethren. (Phil. 3: 17-21.) Some Bible students think that Luke may have been the "man of Macedonia" that Paul saw in the vision. This, of course, could have been true. It is thought by some Bible students that the expression "we were in this city tarrying certain days" indicates that they were there only temporarily; but if Luke was himself a permanent resident of Philippi, he certainly would not, since he never so much as mentions his own name, accommodate the language of his historical account to his own situation, rather than to that of the missionaries themselves.

The Conversion of Lydia and Her Household (Acts 16: 13-15)

And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down; and spake unto the women that were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged

me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

It is quite probable that Paul and his company spent the first few days of their stay in Philippi surveying the possible opportunities which they might have for preaching the gospel. If Luke was already a Christian, which seems very probable, then he very likely obeyed the gospel before moving to Philippi; and if his original home was in Antioch, as suggested in last week's lesson, that may have been the place where he became a Christian. At any rate, God had called the missionaries to Philippi to preach the gospel, and it was essential that they seek to determine where would be the best place for them to begin.

Paul and his company got the idea in some way that there were some Jewish people, or possibly Jewish proselytes, who had a place of prayer, outside the city; and they apparently decided to go there themselves, in the hope of having an opportunity of speaking to the worshippers, on their first sabbath in Europe. The fact that the place of prayer was outside the city, and attended only by women, suggests that there were not enough Jews in the city to maintain a synagogue. This should be a lesson of great encouragement to the "few" of the Lord's people today, in any given location.

Although Luke says that "we" spake unto the women, it appears from verse 14 that Paul was at least the principal speaker. Lydia was a merchant woman from Thyatira, the seat of one of the seven churches in Asia. (Rev. 2, 3.) The fact that she was a dealer in purple, either the dye of the fabric, or both, and which was evidently very expensive, indicates that, while probably not above the necessity of working, she was, nevertheless, in comparatively easy circumstances. Lydia was the head of a household, and lived in a house large enough to entertain Paul and his three companions.

Something of Lydia's character may be learned from the statement of the text, namely, "one that worshipped God," and from the further consideration that in the heathen city of Philippi, where the sabbath of the Jewish Scriptures was unknown

to its inhabitants, she was faithful in observing it. Thus, while other dealers in purple goods were, in all probability, busy on the sabbath day, Lydia closed her shop, regardless of the demands of competition; and while there was no synagogue in which she might worship the true God, and no male Jews to conduct the accustomed service, she and those associated with her habitually left the noisy city, and spent the holy day in prayer on the banks of the river. Such fidelity to God, under circumstances so unfavorable, is not often seen in our own land of opportunity. There are many professed Christians today, who will permit business, pleasure, company, and practically anything else, keep them from worshipping God on the Lord's Day, as the New Testament directs. (Cf. Luke 8: 14; Rev. 1: 10; Acts 2: 42; 20: 7; Heb. 10: 25.)

People today who read the account of Lydia's conversion may sometimes wonder why the heart of a woman like she was needed to be opened. But that her heart was closed in some sense, admits of no doubt; it is, nevertheless, equally certain that her heart's condition was not due to inherited depravity, nor to the hardness of a sinful life; for her character, as we have already seen, was wholly against such an idea. Lydia's heart was closed in the same sense in which the hearts of other pious Jews, and Jewish proselytes, were closed, that is, by their misconception of, and consequent attitude toward, Christ. It was their understanding that the Messiah was coming to the earth, to establish an earthly kingdom; and it was for that and similar reasons that their hearts were steadfastly closed against him as the crucified Redeemer. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 23.) This condition in Lydia's heart had to be corrected, before she would give heed to the things which were spoken by Paul.

There are many people today, both in the church and out of it, whose hearts are closed to certain truths, which are vital to their salvation. And it is easy to see that the same principle is involved in their case, as it was in Lydia's. This truth was taught by Jesus in the parable of the sower, as may be seen by reading his explanation of

the seed which fell by the way side. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side." (Matt. 13: 19; cf. Luke 8: 12.) When any one does not understand the truth, he will almost certainly reject it; for if he is at all sincere, he will not want to accept that which he believes to be out of harmony with the will of God.

As long as Saul of Tarsus misunderstood the truth regarding Jesus, he not only did not accept him as the promised Messiah; he did everything within his power to destroy the church, and put an end to his teaching. But when that same Saul met Jesus on the Damascus road, and was convinced that he was the Christ, he began at that very time to give his life to him, and devoted the remainder of his days, as few others have done, to teaching the truth which the Lord came to reveal, even amid the most severe persecutions. Here are his own words, as to how he felt about the matter: "Howbeit what things were gained to me, these have I counted lost for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." (Phil. 3: 7-11.)

There is therefore no mystery regarding either the closing or the opening of Lydia's heart; and that which was true of her is also true of any one else, who is willing to follow her example. Luke, as we shall see, was very specific with reference to the process by which the Lord opened Lydia's heart, namely, (1) she "heard us," that is, she listened to that which was spoken to her; (2) "whose heart the Lord opened,"

that is, when she learned the truth regarding Jesus, her attitude was changed toward him, so that she no longer thought of him as an impositor, worthy of the death on the cross; (3) and so, instead of feeling about Jesus as she had, she was willing "to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul," that is, she was willing to do that which Paul said that she should do. (4) "And when she was baptized, and her household," or, which is the same thing, when she did that which Paul taught that she should do. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16; Gal. 1: 6-9; 3: 26-27; Rom. 6: 16-18; 6: 1-4.)

James Hastings, in commenting on this incident in the life of Lydia, says, "Immediately on hearing the truth from the lips of the apostle, Lydia applied it to her own soul. She gave 'heed unto the things that were spoken by Paul.' She did precisely what everybody who finds his way into the faith and fellowship of the Son of God has to do sooner or later—she called her own will into action, and by deliberate choice set herself over on the side of him who came to announce a divine love for all and to be a universal Redeemer. It would have been all in vain for her to be present at the river-side prayer meeting, and to listen never so intently to the truth brought to her attention, had she formed no opinion and taken no steps for herself. It would have been all in vain, too, to have her heart opened by the Spirit, had she not brought her will with the will of the Spirit and accepted Christ." (Cf. Rom. 8: 16; Acts 17: 10-12.)

There are some religious teachers who try to make it appear that the "household" of Lydia included infants; and inasmuch as her household were baptized the implication is that infant baptism was both approved and practiced by Paul. But, as Furneaux notes, "this statement cannot be claimed as any argument for infant baptism since the Greek word [for household] may mean her servants or her work-people." Meyer notes that "if, in the Jewish and Gentile families which were converted to Christ, there were children, their baptism is to be assumed in *those* cases, when they were so far advanced that they could and did confess their faith in Jesus as the

Messiah; for this was the universal, absolutely necessary qualifications for the reception of baptism." There are four of these so-called household conversions, listed in the Book of Acts, namely, Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailor, and Crispus. (See Acts, chapters 10, 16, and 18.)

Lydia, following her baptism, constrained, that is, she strongly urged the missionaries to go into her house, and abide there. This invitation, however, was predicated upon their recognition of the genuineness of her faith in Christ. There is no reason to think that Paul and his company had to be unduly persuaded to accept Lydia's hospitality; her constraint was evidently prompted by her gratitude for what they had done for her.

The Missionaries Vindicated and Asked to Leave the City

(Acts 16: 35-40)

But when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go. And the jailor reported the words to Paul, saying, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out. And the sergeants reported these words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans; and they came and besought them; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

The story of how Paul and Silas were shamefully treated, and cast into prison, along with the conversion of the Philippian jailor and his household, is set forth in the verses which are between the second and third sections of the lesson text for today; and they should, of course, be read in connection with this study. The "magistrates" were the public civil officers (equivalent to the Latin *praetores*) of Philippi, while the "serjeants" were the lic-

tors who attended the magistrates; and who applied the rods to the victims of punishment.

Paul and Silas suffered unjustly, without complaint (cf. Matt. 5: 10-12); but when it came to leaving the scene of their ill-treatment, and having the report of it follow them, as if they had been punished justly, Paul was determined that the responsibility for what had been done would be placed where it belonged; and that is exactly what took place. There is no indication that Paul was seeking revenge; he only wanted the

truth to be known. His action was the same, in principle, as his dealing with the evil spirit in verses 16-18. The apostle did not want to be identified with demons; and neither did he want to have the report of his unjust arrest, and subsequent punishment, as if it had been justified, follow him wherever he went to preach the gospel. Paul and his company, except Luke, did leave the city, according to the request of the magistrates; but not before they went to the house of Lydia, saw the brethren, and comforted them.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What unusual interest attaches itself to this lesson?

How did Paul and his company happen to be in Philippi at the time of this lesson?

What lesson in the working of divine providence is seen here?

The Golden Text

What blessing belongs to those who fear Jehovah?

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text written?

What is the meaning of the term "friendship"?

What effect should this promise have on the Lord's people everywhere?

The Arrival of Paul and His Company in Philippi

With what did Luke connect this section of the lesson text?

What does he say about the voyage across the Aegean sea?

Into what kind of a situation were they introduced in Philippi?

What lesson did Paul later draw from the city, when he wrote to the Philippian brethren?

The Conversion of Lydia and Her Household

What did the missionaries apparently do before beginning their actual work in Philippi?

Why did Paul and his company begin their preaching in a "prayer meeting"?

What is suggested by the fact that only women were there and the meeting place outside the city?

at are some of the things which Luke mentions in describing Lydia?

Where was her home and for what is that city noted?

What do we learn from the record regarding Lydia's character?

How does she compare in this respect with many professed Christians of our day?

Why are so many of the Lord's people today so careless about observing the Lord's day?

Why did Lydia need to have her heart opened and how was that accomplished?

Show that people today are in a similar situation and how it can be corrected.

What does Jesus teach regarding the same principle and how did Saul of Tarsus illustrate it?

What were the steps in the conversion of Lydia and her household?

Why did she accept the truth so readily?

How do we know that there were no infants baptized at that time?

Why did Lydia constrain the missionaries to go into her house?

The Missionaries Vindicated and Asked to Leave the City

Why did Paul and Silas need to be vindicated?

How did Paul handle the situation he next morning?

Why did he refuse to leave the prison before responsibility for misdeeds was established?

What lesson should we learn from this?

When did the missionaries leave the city?

Lesson XIII—March 30, 1969

PHILIP, A SUCCESSFUL EVANGELIST

Lesson Text

Acts 8: 4-13, 26-31

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word.

5 And Philip went down to the

city of Sa-ma'-ri-a, and proclaimed unto them the Christ.

6 And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that

were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did.

7 For *from* many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was much joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man, Si-mon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Sa-ma'-ri-a, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great.

11 And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Je-sus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 And Si-mon also himself believed: and being baptized, he con-

tinued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed.

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 E-thi-o'-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.

Golden Text.—“*Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven.*” (Acts 21: 8.)

Devotional Reading—Acts 8: 32-40.

Daily Bible Readings

March 24. M.....	Importance of Preaching (1 Cor. 1: 18-25)
March 25. T.....	Preaching Honorable Work (Isa. 52: 7-12)
March 26. W.....	Philip, One of the Seven (Acts 6: 1-6)
March 27. T.....	Philip in Samaria (Acts 8: 1-8)
March 28. F.....	Philip Preaches in Samaria (Acts 8: 9-13)
March 29. S.....	Duty of the Preacher (Matt. 28: 18-20)
March 30. S.....	Message of the Preacher (Luke 24: 44-49)

Time.—Probably about A.D. 33.

Places.—The city of Samaria, and on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza.

Persons.—Philip, the Samaritans, Simon, and the Ethiopian eunuch.

Introduction

It is always a useful practice to identify the person or persons we are to study in any given lesson. Today's lesson is a good illustration of that need. There are three men by the name of Philip mentioned in the New Testament, namely, (1) Philip the apostle; (2) Philip the evangelist; and (3) Philip the tetrarch, the latter being a half-brother of Herod Antipas, the man who slew John the Baptist. (Luke 3: 1.) It was this last Herod, that is, Herod Philip, described as being

one of the better Herods, whose wife left him to live with her half-brother-in-law, Herod Antipas; and it was her daughter who became the occasion for the slaying of John the Baptist. (Matt. 14: 1-12; Mark 6: 14-29; Luke 3: 18-20.) Philip the apostle is not referred to outside the gospel records, except in Acts 1: 13, which is the last thing the New Testament says about him. Philip the apostle was apparently a friend of Peter and Andrew (they all lived in Bethsaida), and he was

personally invited by Jesus to become one of his disciples. Philip was also the one who found Nathanael, and urged him to meet Jesus with his famous "Come and see." (John 1: 43-51.)

Philip the evangelist, the man about whom we are to study today, is nowhere referred to in the New Testament, outside the Book of Acts, and in that book in only three chapters, namely, 6, 8, and 21. He was one of the seven men who were chosen by the Jerusalem church to serve tables; and was the only one of that group, except Stephen, who became a gospel preacher, as that expression is generally understood, so far as the record goes. Following the martyrdom of Stephen, Philip, apparently being driven out of Jerusalem with the other members of the church (Acts 8: 1), preached the gospel in Samaria, as we shall see in the lesson now before us. After his experience with the Ethiopian eunuch Luke says, "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. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea." (Acts 8: 39, 40.)

The next thing that we hear about Philip the evangelist, was his living

"Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven." His name, and the circumstance under which Philip first comes to the attention of Bible readers, indicate that he was a Grecian Jew. The church, at the time referred to, was largely, if not altogether, confined to the Jerusalem area. Philip, along with thousands of other Jewish people who were living outside the land of Palestine, had come to the capital city of the Jews to attend the feast of Pentecost. But, as it turned out, so far as they were concerned, that was not a typical feast of Pentecost, such as they had been accustomed to. The time had come, in the economy of God, when the new order was to be instituted, and an unrecorded number of the visiting Jews, along with many of the Hebrews, that is, the Jews living in the homeland, accepted the gospel message, and be-

came in Caesarea; and that he had four virgin daughters, who prophesied. It was in this house that Paul, Luke, and others, were entertained, while on their way from Philippi to Jerusalem. Paul had just finished his third missionary journey, and was going to Jerusalem with the brethren, who were taking the collection for the poor saints in that area (1 Cor. 16: 1-4.) Luke had joined the company in Philippi. (Acts 20: 1-6.) It was also in Philip's home that Agabus delivered his famous prophecy regarding the forthcoming arrest of Paul in Jerusalem, at which time the brethren pled with the apostle not to go on to the Jewish capital. But Paul was committed to the task of taking the contribution to Jerusalem; and he would not be persuaded. The brethren then ceased their pleadings and said, "The will of the Lord be done." (Acts 21:7-14.)

Although the incident just referred to is the last mention in the New Testament regarding Philip the evangelist, it is interesting to note that Eusebius included in his *Ecclesiastical History* some references to this Philip as *an apostle*; and that may be the reason why some people today do the same thing. Those who are interested in reading that which Eusebius says about Philip, can find it in chapter 31.

The Golden Text

came members of the church which came into being, as a living organism, on that great day of Pentecost.

It appears that in the providence of God many of the "foreign Jews" who had obeyed the gospel were detained in Jerusalem, until they were sufficiently grounded in the faith. The funds of such people would in time become exhausted; and it was for this reason that many of the local Jews, and others who were situated so that they could, sold their possessions and turned the proceeds over to the apostles, to be used in caring for those who were in need. And in the process of time, the Grecian Jews murmured against the Hebrews, because their widows were being neglected in the daily ministrations. This matter was brought to the attention of the apostles, and in due time seven men, apparently all of them from the complaining

group, were appointed to serve tables, and the problem was solved, so far as the record goes.

The Philip we are studying about today, as has already been pointed out, was among the seven who were chosen for that specific work; but when he was compelled to leave the city, because of persecution, he went out as a gospel preacher and a most effective one. Two instances of the type of work he did are set forth in the lesson text. We have no idea where Philip's home was before he came to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, and we are likewise left in the dark as to why he decided to make his home in Caesarea. But we do know that that city became

an important place in the history of the church, first, because it was there that the first Gentile converts were made. We do not know whether or not Philip had made his home in Caesarea at the time of this lesson, or whether he settled there when he finished his preaching tour, referred to in Acts 8: 40. If one wonders why Philip's name was not mentioned in connection with the bringing in of the Gentiles, as it was when the Samaritans were converted to Christ, the answer is that the latter required the work of an apostle; and the apostle was selected who had the keys of the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 16: 18, 19.)

The Text Explained

Philip's Preaching and Miracles

(Acts 8: 4-8)

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those that had unclean spirits they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city.

When the persecution arose, following the martyrdom of Stephen, the disciples, except the apostles, left the city of Jerusalem; and that* of course, brought to an end the work of serving tables, in which Philip had been engaged, if indeed it had continued up to this time. At any rate, those who were driven away from their home had no bitterness in their hearts, but instead went about proclaiming the gospel of Christ, wherever they had an opportunity. Luke says that the disciples who left Jerusalem, "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria." Jesus had told his apostles, just before his ascension that they would be his "witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 8.) Jerusalem had been thoroughly evangelized; and

now the time had come for the work to begin in the adjacent territory.

Although disputed by Josephus and others, it appears that the Samaritans were the descendants of the mixed marriages of the poorer Jewish people who were left in Samaria, following the captivity by the Assyrians, and some of the foreigners who were brought into that country by the conquerors just referred to. But whether this was true or not, John says that "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." (John 4: 9.) This, of course, implies that the orthodox Hebrew Christians had little or no desire to preach the gospel to the Samaritan people, as long as they remained Samaritans; and that the latter would not be very enthusiastic about hearing it. (Cf. the Lord's experience with the Samaritan woman, as set forth in John 4.) It may have been providential therefore that a Hellenistic Jew, rather than a Hebrew, went to the city of Samaria, as a gospel preacher.

Bible students are not agreed as to the identity of the city in which Philip did his preaching. The definite article before Samaria, that is, *the* Samaria, is in the original (see Westcott and Hort); and that seems to indicate that the reference is to the capital city itself. Herod had recently rebuilt the city, and had changed the name to *Sebaste*, in honor of August Caesar. The Greek word *Sebastos* literally means *venerable, reverend, august*; and the classical *Greek-English Lexicon*, by

Liddell and Scott, says that "the imperial name *Augustus* was rendered by *Sebastos*.

It is very probable that the visit of Jesus in Samaria (see John 4: 39-42) prepared the way for the success which attended the labors of Philip, when he preached there. Jesus foresaw this, when he said to his disciples: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest. He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For herein is the saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not labored: others have labored, and ye are entered into their labor." (John 4: 35-38.) In his poem, *Harvest*, P. J. O'Reilly says,

"Down the furrow strides the sower

From his hand the live seed leap

In his heart the hope of harvest

Little knowing who will reap!

"Harvest comes in, teeming—teeming—

Golden stalk and laden ear,

But the sower's sleeping—sleeping

In the earth he held so dear!

"So through life, if I am sowing,"

What to me the toil or gain?

If my brothers reap the harvest

I shall not have lived in vain!

Where, asks David Thomas, could the disciples of Christ find a better reception for the gospel message, than where Jesus himself had preached? Samaria, as it were, became a bridge over which the gospel passed from Jerusalem to the great outside world; and the reception of the Samaritan Christians, by their Jewish brethren, was the first step in bringing the Gentiles to Christ. This is plainly indicated by the events which transpired there, as recorded in Acts 8: 14-17.

God has always seen to it that his word was fully confirmed and established, before he asked any one to believe and accept it. And until that was done, wherever the gospel was preached, there was some one present, or available, who could

perform miracles, for the purpose of showing beyond question, that the spoken message was indeed God's word. (See Mark 16: 19, 20; Heb. 2: 1-4.) This was the way it was with Philip's ministry in Samaria, as the lesson text now under consideration plainly states, namely, "And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city."

Simon the Sorcerer and Philip's Success

(Acts 8: 9-13)

But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God, which is called Great. And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and, beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed.

The Samaritans claimed to believe in Jehovah, but they received no part of his word, except the Pentateuch, that is, the five books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy. The part which they did receive was indeed God's word, but it was not all of his revealed will to his people. It was necessary for the people of that age to know that which the law said, but it was also essential that they be familiar with the songs of the poets, and the preaching of the prophets. If the Samaritans had been familiar with all of the Old Testament Scriptures, it would have been much easier for them to have seen through and rejected, the sorceries of Simon as being false. It is always true, that when people accept only a part of

that which God has spoken, and are unfamiliar with other portions of his revealed will, it will be much easier for them to be led astray by false teachers.

The theme of Philip's preaching in Samaria was "the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." The prophets had predicted the coming of the kingdom (Dan. 2: 44), and both John the Baptist and Jesus had preached that it was at hand (Matt. 3: 1; Mark 1: 14, 15). The kingdom of Christ was established on the first Pentecost, following the Lord's ascension; and those who heard the gospel message, and responded to its requirements, were delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. (Col. 1: 13.) Satan had long usurped the kingdoms of this world (that is, *the inhabited earth*, marginal note, Luke 4: 5-7, a fact which neither Jesus nor any one else denied); but now, with the kingdom of Christ firmly established, people had the opportunity to be freed from the reign of the evil one, and become citizens of the heavenly kingdom. And when the people of Samaria believed that which Philip said regarding the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Jesus, in the early part of his ministry, said that one must be born anew, before he could enter into the kingdom of heaven (John 3: 3-5), but we know from the lesson text now before us, and other parts of the New Testament, that Jesus was referring to obedience to the gospel, which would later be preached. When people hear the gospel, and believe it, they are begotten of God (1 John 5: 7); and when they are baptized into Christ, they are born of water (Tit. 3: 5-7). To believe and obey the gospel, is to be born of the water and the Spirit. Simon, the sorcerer, did exactly that which the others in Samaria did; and if the latter were in the kingdom or the church (cf. Matt. 16: 18, 19, where church and kingdom are used interchangeably), so was Simon. Only those who have a theory to defend, such as the impossibility of a child of God to sin, so as to be lost, will deny that Simon was saved, as a result of his obedience.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

(Acts 8: 26-31)

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. 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. And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said. Understandest thou what thou reeatest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

When a person gives himself unreservedly to the Lord, as Philip evidently did, there will always be work for him to do; and while we cannot, in this age of the world, expect to be miraculously guided into fields of labor, we can depend upon the providence of God. There are many, many honest people, who will obey the gospel when they hear it; and if we are willing to be used of the Lord in taking the message to them, it will not be difficult for us to find many fields which are already white unto harvest.

Philip apparently was in Samaria when the angel spoke to him; and if so, he was some thirty-six miles north of Jerusalem. Gaza was on the seacoast, southwest of Jerusalem. If one will consult a map, it will be easy for him to see the relative positions of Samaria, Jerusalem, and Gaza. The "desert" probably referred to an uninhabited section of the country, through which the road from Jerusalem to Gaza passed. The original word for desert is *eremos*, the identical term from which we have "wilderness" in Luke 15: 4, where the shepherd was evidently pasturing his sheep. We learn from Mark 6: 30-39 that a "desert place" could have green grass, and that, of course, implies that it was not a barren waste, with no water supply: it was simply uninhabited. Arndt-Gingrich says

that the term for "desert," as used in the text now under consideration, means *lonely*. (Cf. Acts 1: 20.) The word "desolate," in the passage just referred to, is from the same original term. "Let his habitation be made desolate," that is, let no one occupy it.

Philip promptly obeyed the voice of the angel; and when he reached the designated road, he saw the man whom Luke describes in the text now before us. The eunuch was either a Jew, or a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and was what we would call the Secretary of the Treasury in the queen's cabinet. The original word for "Candace" is *Kandakē*, which was the title of the queen of Ethiopia, just as the king of Egypt, in Old Testament times, was called the pharaoh, or our chief executive, the president. *The New English Bible* renders verse 27 in these words: "So he set out and was on his way when he caught sight of an Ethiopian. This man was a eunuch, a high official of the Kandake, or Queen, of Ethiopia, in charge of all her treasure." This eunuch was evidently a devout man, and had probably been to Jerusalem to worship, during one of the annual feast days; and as he was returning to his home, he was engaged in reading the Bible. Philip, however, did not know that the Lord wanted him to contact the man who was in the chariot. He had done all that the angel told him to do; and that was all the instruction he had at the time he saw the Ethiopian.

It was at this point that the Spirit spoke to Philip; and told him what to do. The words of the Spirit were: "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." That is all the Spirit said to Philip at this time, so far as the record goes; and the whole situation is in marked contrast with the popular denominational idea on the subject of conversion today. The Spirit knew that that was all the instruction which Philip needed. He simply wanted to get the two men together; for he knew that when a man of Philip's evangelistic fervor, came in contact with a man who was interested in the word of God, that the evangelist would know what to do. The remainder of the narrative in the chapter from which this section of the lesson text is taken, tells the story of the Ethiopian's conversion to Christ, and that which happened to Philip. (Acts 8: 32-40.) It is easy to see from the record of his life, that Philip was one of the pioneers in taking the gospel to men of nations, other than the Jews. He simply took hold of the opportunities which came to him for preaching the gospel, regardless of who his hearers were, or where they lived. Paul S. Rees, in his book, *Men of Action in the Book of Acts*, refers to Philip as the man who could fade out gracefully. He did indeed fade from the light of inspired history, but one likes to think that he continued to be a soul-winner for Christ, as long as he lived.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Discuss the persons and characters of the three Philips of the New Testament.
Where alone can we read about the Philip of our lesson for today?
Where was this Philip living when he disappears from sacred history and what happened there?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Philip the evangelist first come to the stage of action?
What is implied regarding his conversion to Christ and his remaining in Jerusalem?
What difference in attitude is noted be-

tween the Hebrews and the Grecian Jews?
What is known regarding Philip's home before he came to Jerusalem, or why he decided to settle in Caesarea?
What are some of the things for which the city of Caesarea became noted in Bible history?
Why didn't Philip take the lead in the bringing in of the Gentiles?

Philip's Preaching and Miracles

What happened to Philip when he, along with others, was driven out of Jerusalem?
How did all of this fit into the plan which was announced by Jesus, just before his ascension?
Who were the Samaritans, and why was Philip a suitable man to preach to them?

In what part of Samaria was the probable scene of Philip's preaching?

What was probably a contributing factor to the Samaritans' ready acceptance of the gospel?

What is the relationship between the sower and the reaper?

What important role did Samaria play in the over-all spread of the gospel of Christ?

Why was Philip empowered to perform miracles in connection with his preaching?

Simon the Sorcerer and Philip's Success

What was the religious status of the Samaritan people?

Why is it essential for those who please God to accept all of the inspired revelation?

Why were the people of Samaria so easily deceived by Simon?

What lesson should we learn from this for our own day?

What was the theme of Philip's preaching in Samaria?

When was the kingdom of Christ established, and how is it related to the church?

Under what circumstance were the Samaritans baptized?

How alone can one enter the kingdom of Christ?

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Why was Philip always such a busy man and what is the lesson to us?

Where, apparently, was Philip when the angel spoke to him?

Give the relative locations of Samaria, Jerusalem, and Gaza.

To what desert did the angel make reference and what was it like?

Who was the man whom Philip saw when he came to the road to which he was directed?

What further instruction did the evangelist need and who supplied it?

Why didn't the Spirit say more to Philip?

How did Philip get the opportunity to talk with the eunuch?

What was the result of his preaching?



SECOND QUARTER THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

AIM.—To acquaint ourselves fully with all of the important events in this interesting and significant period of Israel's history, and to observe especially the ever present hand of God in the affairs of the realm.

Lesson I—April 6, 1969

REBELLION IN ISRAEL

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 8: 4-9, 19-22

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.—*“And Jehovah said unto Samuel . . . they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them.”* (1 Sam. 8: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 8: 11-17.

Daily Bible Readings

March	31. M.....	Israel's Evil Desired Sam. 8: 19-22)
April	1. T.....	Jehovah Rejected (1 Sam. 8: 1-9)
April	2. W.....	Samuel Warns Israel (1 Sam. 8: 10-17)
April	3. T.....	Effect of Rejection (1 Chron. 28: 9)
April	4. F.....	Paul's Warning (Rom. 11: 22)
April	5. S.....	Stephen's Censure (Acts 7: 51-53)
April	6. S.....	Israel's Rebellious Spirit (1 Sam. 10: 17-20)

TIME.—1095 B.C.

PLACE.—Ramah.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Samuel, and the elders of Israel.

Introduction

Samuel was one of the greatest men of the Old Testament period. (Jer. 15: 1.) He was the first of the prophets, after Moses, and was therefore the head of a long line of those spokesmen for God, which

reached from his day to Malachi and John the Baptist (Acts 3: 22-24); and he was also the last of the judges (1 Sam. 7: 15; Acts 13: 20). The work of Moses was not limited to a single sphere; and what was

true of the great emancipator of Israel, was also true of Samuel; for we learn from the Scriptures that he was to Israel a prophet, priest, and judge. And when one reads the record of the judges, as set forth in the inspired record, it will be easy for him to see that it is practically certain that no judge, among them who went before him, exercised the power and authority which characterized Samuel. The record plainly indicates that the people stood in greater awe of Samuel, than they did of the king; and even the king himself was rebuked by Samuel more than once. (1 Sam. 13: 1 Iff; 15: 10ff.) The place and work of Samuel have been summed up in an admirable manner by the editor of *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, in the following paragraphs.

"The time 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 a close, and the demand for a king was making itself heard. Such times of transition, when old things are passing away, and the new order 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, which 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.

"That which has just been said was certainly true of Samuel, so much so, that he has been referred to as the first martyr of the order of the prophets. He stood between the past and the future, between the living and the dead. He was brought up in reverence for the days of old, but with a new order impending, he was placed in a position where he had to meditate in an epoch full of changes, between the old and the new; with the result that he found himself among those who are assaulted from both sides. Those in this kind of a situation are charged by one side with going too far, by the other, with not going far enough; by some, with saying too

much, by others, with not saying enough."

Men who belong to the class we are now considering cannot be comprehended at a glance like Moses or Elijah or Isaiah; and they are therefore thrust aside. But what those who seek to dismiss them fail to see, is that they are the silent healers, who bind up the wounds of their age; and who are the reconcilers, who turn the hearts of the fathers and the children to each other. The real power of such men lies in the fact that, while they are driven more or less to take active parts in the affairs of their country, they are, or may be, as Samuel was, men of deep religious feeling, whose eyes are constantly fixed on him who is invisible, who try to shape their policies, amid the hard and intractable affairs of this world, in accordance with the immutable will of God.

William Sanford LaSor, in his book, *Great Personalities of the Old Testament*, says that there is something magnificent about being a man of God in difficult times. It certainly is not as glamorous, as it would be if everything was going well. "But—suppose there had been no Samuel? Suppose there had been no one to hold things together, no one to guide, or counsel, or rebuke, or point out God's way? Would the kingdom then have come into existence? Perhaps so; perhaps God would have raised up someone else—but the fact remains that he raised up *Samuel*, the last of the judges and the first of the prophets, and laid great work upon him in full confidence that he would do it, and do it well. Samuel did it well; no man can deny that." The words which Wordsworth inscribed to Milton, in his sonnet *London, 1802*, could well have been written of Samuel:

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt
apart:

Thou hadst a voice whose sound was
like the sea:

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic,
free,

So didst thou travel on life's com-
mon way,

In cheerful godliness; and yet thy
heart

The lowliest duties on herself did
lay.

The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is included in the principal text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

The Text Explained

The Elders of Israel Demand a King

(1 Sam. 8: 4, 5)

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.

It is generally thought that Samuel was about sixty years old, at the time of this lesson. He had probably served as judge himself for about twenty years; but he apparently felt that the time had come when he should be relieved of some of the responsibility and pressure, which went with the office. Nothing is said about any physical disability, other than the fact that he was getting old. The infirmities which go with old age probably rendered Samuel unfit for the demands which his "circuit judgeship" (1 Sam. 7: 15-17) made upon him; and caused him to feel that he should have some judicial assistance, especially in areas away from his home in Ramah.

The first three verses of the chapter from which the lesson text is taken, tell us that Samuel made his sons judges; with Beer-sheba as their place of operation. These sons, however, did not walk in the ways of their father, "but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice." (1 Sam. 8: 3.) There is no reason to conclude that Samuel relinquished his position as judge of Israel, when he made his sons judges; and they should therefore be looked upon as helping their father bear the great burdens, which the latter was having to carry. The sons of Samuel had probably been carefully trained by their father for the duties which he assigned to them; for their is no indication that he overindulged them, as Eli had treated his sons. Samuel may have thought of the advice which Jethro gave to Moses, regarding assistance when the work was too heavy for one to do it alone. (Ex. 18: 13-27.)

Beer-sheba was some distance

from Ramah; and it sometimes happens that an otherwise good person, when brought under certain circumstances, will yield to temptation, and do things which he would not otherwise have done, had he been in better surroundings, and in the company of better people. But be that as it may, it is a recorded fact that the sons of Samuel did do wrong, and failed utterly in measuring up to their father's example. It would therefore be perfectly natural for one to conclude that the leaders of Israel would be justified in protesting the evil conduct of Samuel's sons, and requesting some kind of relief; but when they used the occasion to ask for something which they wanted, something which was completely unrelated to the corruption of the under-judges, and totally contrary to God's revealed will for them, their sin was evident.

The motive which prompted their request, and which revealed something of the condition of their heart, was revealed by the following words, namely, "like all the nations." The leaders of Israel had been looking at the nations, instead of God; and that was the attitude which prompted their determination to have their own way. When Peter obtained the permission of Christ to attempt to walk upon the water, as he beheld Jesus doing, he was successful as long as he kept his eyes upon the Lord; but when he looked upon the difficulties, namely, the wind and the waves, he immediately began to sink. Likewise, Achan was not led into sin, until he continued to look upon and covet the desire of his heart. (Read Matt. 14: 22-33; Josh. 7: 20, 21.) The lust for something other than, and different from, that which God provides for his people, is that which brings them into sin. (James 1: 13, 14.)

The men of Israel were asking for something, the nature and consequences of which they utterly failed to realize. They were wise, of course, in diagnosing their troubles, but they were in no position to pass on the merits of a complete change in

the form of their government—from a theocracy, which was authorized by God himself, to a monarchy, to be like the people about them. Furthermore, there is no indication that the nations about them changed their form of government, because of the corruption of some of their former officials; but that was what the elders of Israel wanted Samuel to think was their motive for the change which they demanded. But it is obvious, from the record, that the Israelites were not primarily concerned with a desire for righteous judges; they simply wanted to imitate that which they admired in others, and seized upon the situation which was brought about by the wickedness of Samuel's sons, and used it for the occasion to make known their true wishes. The desire to keep up with the world has often been the downfall of God's people.

This is probably a good place to call attention to the fact that some people seem to have difficulty in distinguishing between a departure from that which is written, and in making use of modern means in accomplishing that which the Lord's people are authorized to do. For example, the radio, television, moving picture shows, and similar communication media, are daily influencing the lives of millions of people. The technique of advertising through the press, on the billboard and screen, and over radio and television has been developed to the extent that the lives of multiplied millions of people have been changed. This can easily be seen by the constantly increasing habits of cigarette smoking and liquor drinking on the part of women and girls.

All of the influences just mentioned have produced a different attitude on the part of people in general; and when it comes to a good work like preaching the gospel, it should be obvious to any thoughtful person, that no congregation or individual gospel preacher is going to make use of the potential which is available, while ignoring the modern means of reaching the public, as indicated in the above paragraph. The gospel must be made to appeal to people with the present-day attitude, that is, to people who are affected by the influences to which reference has already been made.

The gospel itself had not changed, and it will not change, and neither will the church, in its basic conception; but if people are to be reached by the gospel, and brought into the church, then adequate modern means must be employed.

But the fact that modern means for reaching people with the gospel must be sought out and put into use, if the greatest good is to be accomplished, does not mean that something must be done which is contrary to the spirit and teaching of the New Testament; but it does mean that such modern means which are available must be employed. Thus, in addition to the pulpit, those who are engaged in evangelism must take hold of the very things which have been used to educate people in the wrong way, that is, the Lord's people must use the radio, television, and other modern means of mass communication, and thereby try to bring people to an understanding and acceptance of God's way. The battle must be pressed on every side, and by every legitimate means, if God's will is to be accomplished.

Samuel's Reaction and Jehovah's Response

(1 Sam. 8: 6-9)

But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto Jehovah. 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. 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. 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.

There was nothing about the proposal which the elders of Israel made to Samuel, regarding the change in their form of government, which pleased the old prophet and judge. It certainly did not please him personally. No man who is

sincerely trying to do right, and who is certain that he has the Lord's approval, enjoys having his role called in question; and it is, of course, painful to be bluntly told that one's children are gross sinners. But a man like Samuel could and would do something about the latter, as may be inferred from 1 Samuel 12: 2. If Samuel himself did not actually remove his sons from office, he at least informed the people that they were with them, and that they could be dealt with appropriately. It is well to note that no further charge was made against the sons of Samuel.

It is altogether probable that personal and family considerations affected Samuel's views regarding the demand for a king; but it appears that 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, of course, that the people did not deliberately intend to reject God as their ultimate leader; but 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 an outright rejection of him as their ruler. Jehovah will never accept second place in any one's devotion.

But whatever may have been Samuel's reasons for being displeased with the request for a king, which the elders of Israel made of him, he took the matter to God in prayer, before committing himself with reference to the question, one way or another. This was a matter which involved the will of God; and Samuel had too much faith in, and respect for, Jehovah to permit himself to act, before ascertaining the letter's 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, and that if a change was in keeping with the divine will, then that, too, would be made plain to him. 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.)

When people who profess to be followers of Christ reject the leaders whom he ordains, they are, in effect, rejecting Christ; and this is a truth which should be emphasized again and again. The writer of Hebrews, in speaking of the elders in the church, says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13: 17.) Jehovah, in the case now under consideration, took notice of the indignity to which Samuel was being subjected; and he encouraged his faithful servant by telling him that it was, in reality, he, that is, Jehovah, who was being rejected. This should certainly encourage us to bear, with patience, any shameful practices and indignities which are thrust upon us. Our main consideration should be to see to it that we ourselves are doing the best we can to please the Lord. (Cf. Psalm 69: 6-9.)

The reference to the continuously sinful practices of Israel, from Egypt to the time of this lesson, was apparently made for the encouragement of Samuel; and in it Jehovah reminded the aged prophet and judge that the rebellious attitude on the part of his people was nothing new. If Jehovah were not a merciful God, Israel would have been destroyed long before they asked for a king. (Cf. Num. 14: 11, 12; Deut. 9: 7, 8; Psalm 106: 21-23.) It frequently happens that Jehovah will permit 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. On the contrary, God graciously warns his rebellious people what to expect. This principle is just as true now, as it was during the time of Samuel; for no one can read the Bible, without being informed regarding the end of any course of action.

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. 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 solemn warning of Samuel, which Jehovah told him to give, had no effect whatsoever on the people, so far as causing them to change their mind was concerned. They were adamant; and once their real desire was made known, they felt no further need to bolster their arguments, by any 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 that which they said to introduce the petition, was only intended for an occasion to get the question before Samuel.

The aged prophet and judge listened to all that 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 his-

tory, 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 men's hands the future of his people.

But nowhere in the life of Samuel is his greatness seen better, than in his effort 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 pursue a certain course, or give up a certain practice which concerns others, as well as ourselves; when such obedience, so far as the world is concerned, will mean a public slight, or even a humiliation. Such obedience signifies, not only the giving up of our own will, but humbling ourselves, when we thought that we were right. But it is then that our obedience will be worth something; for the person who thus obeys is not the spiritless, unintelligent drone that always does that which he is told to do, because it is less trouble, or because it is easier to obey than not to; but the man who really obeys is the man who, having a mind and will in opposition to the voice of authority, gladly puts them aside, when once he has understood the voice of authority.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

What kind of a place does Samuel occupy in the history of the Old Testament?

What were some of his accomplishments?

What unique place did he have in the history of his people?

What character-advantages does one enjoy by living in difficult times?

The Elders of Israel Demand a King

What was the status of Samuel at the time of this lesson?

What probable reasons did he have for making his sons judges?

What kind of officials did they make and where were they stationed?

Is there any indication that Samuel con-

doned their sinful actions? Give reasons for your answer.

What reasons did the elders of Israel offer as a basis for their demand for a king?

In what way did they make known their insincerity and downright sinfulness?

What was their real motive in asking for a king?

What had been wrong with their vision and what lesson is there in their example for us?

What were the people of Israel actually asking for, when they demanded a king?

What change in the form of government did their request involve?

What important lesson should we learn from the situation which they created?

What is the difference between a departure from God's way and the adoption of modern means for the accomplishment of his will?

Show what is involved in this proposition and how it works.

Samuel's Reaction and Jehovah's Response

In what way did Samuel react to the proposal which was made by the elders of Israel?

Why did he react in such a manner?

What evidently was his greatest concern in the matter?

What did Jehovah say to Samuel about the demand for a king?

Why was their demand a rejection of God?

Why won't Jehovah accept second place in any one's devotion?

In what way did Samuel deal with the question before him?

What are some of the lessons we should learn from this for our day?

When God allows people to have their own way, what else does he do?

The Warning Rejected and the Demand Granted

What important role was assigned to Samuel in the transition at the time of this lesson?

In what particular thing is the greatness of Samuel seen?

Why was he able to act as he did?

What effect should the knowledge of this have on our lives?

What is the meaning and implication of real obedience?

How can we demonstrate this in our own lives?

Who alone has the right to speak with authority in matters of true religion?

How can one acquire the habit of acceptable obedience?

Lesson II—April 13, 1969

SAUL, ISRAEL'S FIRST KING

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 9: 15-21; 13: 1-4

15 Now Je-ho'-vah had revealed unto Sam'-u-el a day before Saul came, saying,

16 To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Ben'-ja-min, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Is'-ra-el; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Phi-lis'-tines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Sam'-u-el saw Saul, Je-ho'-vah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Sam'-u-el in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Sam'-u-el answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Is'-ra-el? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house?

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Ben'-ja-mite, of the smallest of the tribes of Is'-ra-el? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Ben'-ja-min? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?

1 Saul was [*forty*] years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Is'-ra-el,

2 Saul chose him three thousand men of Is'-ra-ël, whereof two thousand were with Saul in Mich'-mash and in the mount of Beth'-el, and a thousand were with Jon'-a-than in Gib'-e-ah of Ben'-ja-min: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

3 And Jon'-a-than smote the garrison of the Phi-lis'-tines that was in Ge'-ba; and the Phi-lis'-tines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Is'-ra-el heard say that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Phi-lis'-tines, and also that Is'-ra-el was had in abomination with the Phi-lis'-tines. And the people were gathered together after Saul to Gil-gal.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And all the people shouted, and said, Long live the king."* (1 Sam. 10: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 10: 17-24.

Daily Bible Readings

April	7.	M.....	The Call of Saul (1 Sam. 10: 1-8)
April	8.	T.....	The Crowning of Saul (1 Sam. 11: 12-15)
April	9.	W.....	The Associates of Saul (1 Sam. 10: 20-25)
April	10.	T.....	The Disobedience of Saul (1 Sam. 13: 5-14)
April	11.	F.....	The Jealousy of Saul (1 Sam. 18: 6-11)
April	12.	S.....	The Rejection of Saul (1 Sam. 15: 13-23)
April	13.	S.....	The Death of Saul (1 Sam. 31: 1-6)

TIME.—1095-1093 B.C.

PLACES.—An unnamed city, possibly Naioth, and Michmash.

PERSONS.—Samuel, Saul, and others.

Introduction

When people make up their minds to have their own way, there is hardly any length which they are unwilling to travel, if only they can accomplish their purpose. And when people assume this kind of an attitude, they are in no mood to listen to the voice of warning or reason. Samuel, at the command of Jehovah, went into great detail to inform the elders of Israel just what to expect, if they insisted on having a king; but his words fell on deaf ears and unresponsive hearts, that is, so far as their feeling toward God was concerned. They had made up their minds, and they did not intend to take "No" for an answer, or to be turned aside from the accomplishment of their purpose.

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. Or, to express the same thing in another way, they would have to cease to emphasize the governments of their local tribes, and concentrate on a consolidated or centralized leadership. They had reached the point in their thinking where, in their judgment, nothing but a military power would suffice; and if that was to be accomplished, they, like the nations about them, would have to have a monarchy. And when once their minds

were made up, let it be repeated, they intended to go all the way, even if it meant leaving God out of their planning. It did, indeed, leave him out; for not once did they mention him in connection with their demand for a king.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Roman brethren, he said, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15: 4a); and if we are wise today, we will endeavor to profit from the gross sin of the Israelites of this lesson. The church today is made up of God's people, and it is just as essential for us to walk in the way which he has ordained for us, as it was for the people of the previous dispensation. Paul says, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) And Peter, writing in the same vein, points out that "his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue." (2 Pet. 1: 3.) This should be sufficient to assure us that we have no need for anything which the "nations" about us can supply; and to warn us of the danger of making any effort to imitate them.

The Golden Text

"And all the people shouted, and said, Long live the king." These are the closing words of the paragraph which tells of the selection of Saul to be the king of Israel. The entire paragraph reads as follows: "And Samuel called the people together

unto Jehovah to Mizpah; and he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that

oppressed you: but ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes, and by your thousands. So Samuel brought all tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families; and the family of the Matrites was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken: but when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they asked of Jehovah further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And Jehovah answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage. And they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, Long live the king." (1 Sam. 10: 17-24.)

This was the public choosing of the new king, and the passage has been quoted so that we can see something of the condition into which their rebellion against Jehovah had led them. After being told plainly that they had turned their back upon their Benefactor, they still wanted a human king to go before them, and were in no mood whatsoever to listen to the old prophet who had so long judged and guided them. They had always been blessed when God was their Governor, but that made no difference to them, when once they had made up their minds to have their

own way. Jehovah intended to let them have their own way about the king, but he wanted them to realize what they were doing namely, rejecting God who had redeemed them from their enemies, and supplied all their needs. They, in effect, were saying that they could live better by sense, than they could by faith; and any one who will stop to think, will have to admit that many of us today really feel the same way about such matters. (Cf. Matt. 6: 24-34.) Human nature is substantially the same as it has always been; and the only way to overcome it is by becoming partakers of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1: 3-11.)

Samuel knew that Jehovah had already selected Saul to be the new king over Israel, and Samuel himself had already anointed him (1 Sam. 10: 1); but Jehovah and Samuel both knew that some of the people, at least, would not be satisfied, if the appointment depended solely upon the testimony of the prophet. And it was apparently for this reason that the use of the lot was brought to bear upon the selection of Saul to be king. The lot had long been considered as being the Lord's method in dealing with such matters, as may be seen by reading Proverbs 16: 33; 18: 18. But if those people who insisted on a human king had really understood the Scriptures, they would have known that any one who was chosen from any tribe other than Judah, would sooner or later have to be replaced. (Gen. 49: 10; cf. Psalm 119: 11.) The people accepted the choice of the king, as coming from Jehovah; and they clearly saw, from the physical standpoint (that which interested them most), that Saul could not have been surpassed.

The Text Explained

The Future King Revealed to Samuel

(1 Sam. 9: 15-17)

Now Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people.

The manner in which Saul was led to Samuel is at once a delightful story and a forceful illustration of the workings of divine providence. The entire account of Saul's journey to the prophet is perfectly natural, but it was all overruled by Jehovah for the purpose of bringing Samuel

and the future king together. Saul was a man of Benjamin, and his father's name was Kish, who was described as a mighty man of valor. (1 Sam. 9: 1.) The historian, in speaking of the future king, says that Kish "had a son, whose name was Saul, a young man and a goodly; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." (1 Sam. 9: 2.)

The intriguing narrative, which leads up to the crowning of Saul to be king over Israel, begins with the loss of Kish's asses, and the sending of Saul and a servant in search of them. After looking for them in the neighboring areas, the two men came on the third day to the neighborhood of Samuel's residence; and it was there that Saul proposed to the servant that they give up the search, and return home; lest Saul's father "leave off caring for the asses, and be anxious for us."

It was at this time that the servant said to Saul, "Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man that is held in honor; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go." But Saul hesitated about doing that; because they had nothing to offer the man of God. The servant, however, had the fourth part of a shekel of silver in his hand, and he suggested that he would give him that "to tell us our way." The historian then explained, parenthetically, "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." Saul accepted the servant's suggestion, regarding the gift to the man of God, and replied in these words: "Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was."

As Saul and the servant approached the city to which they were going, they inquired of some young maidens, whom they saw, regarding the man of God; and, following their instructions, they were soon in his presence: for as they entered the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them, on his way

to the high place to bless the sacrifice before the people ate. The young women had explained to the two men that there was to be a sacrifice that day in the high place, and that Samuel was going up there to eat; for the people would not eat until he arrived, "because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that are bidden." Samuel was prepared for this meeting with Saul, for Jehovah had revealed to him on the day before that he was sending Saul to him; but Saul, of course, did not know anything about those circumstances.

Saul's Feast and Communion with Samuel

(1 Sam. 9: 18-21)

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day; and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?

It is interesting to note the contrast between Samuel and Saul, when they first came together. Saul's interest in Samuel, at the time of their meeting, was in obtaining information from him regarding the whereabouts of the lost asses; and his attitude perhaps was not far removed from that of one who might consult a magician; and it is also interesting to observe that Saul's last act with reference to Samuel was in connection with the witch of Endor. (1 Sam. 28.) But Samuel's words to Saul, on the other hand, were beautiful in their smothering of all personal feeling, and dignified in their authority. The prophet at once took command of Saul, and prepared him by "half-hints" for something great to come.

When Samuel directed Saul to "go up before me unto the high place," that was a sign of honor; and the invitation to the sacrificial feast was another. The promise to disclose to Saul the latter's own hidden thoughts, may have pointed to some secret ambition, or ambitions, which the young man entertained; and if so, then the knowledge of such a disclosure would prove that Samuel was indeed a prophet. The assurance that the lost asses had been found would ease Saul's mind, and would satisfy the immediate purpose which he had in going to Samuel; while the reference to all that was desirable in Israel would tend to cause Saul to put his mind on the serious business which Jehovah had for him. The future king responded to Samuel with becoming modesty, which indicates that he had some understanding of that which the prophet meant by the semi-veiled remarks which the latter had made to him.

The events which followed, when Samuel and Saul reached the high place, are graphically related by the inspired writer in the closing paragraphs of the chapter from which the preceding sections of the lesson text are taken. "And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, who were about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee, And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold, that which hath been reserved! set it before thee and eat; because unto the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

"And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel abroad. As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant

pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still first, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God." (1 Sam. 9: 22-27.)

The marginal reading for "thigh" is *shoulder*, and the reference is probably to that portion of the sacrifice, which belonged to Samuel as the priest. (See Lev. 7: 32, and the marginal note.) The special attentions which were paid to Saul at the feast, and especially the giving of Samuel's portion of the sacrifice to him, signified the transference of the power of leadership from Samuel to Saul; and all of this must have been well understood by those who were present at the feast. It could then be seen that the monarchy was reserved for Saul, and the formal investiture was made by the prophet himself. Samuel then anointed Saul to be king, and revealed to him some things which would happen to him on his way home. (1 Sam. 10: 1-16.)

Although Jehovah had not intended that his people should have a human king, but when they demanded one, as we have already seen, God yielded to their desires, and Saul was in time placed upon the throne. It should always be kept in mind that the new king, although made so because of the rebellious attitude on the part of the people, was expected to obey Jehovah, and accomplish the work which was given him to do. Or, to state the same thing in another way, Saul was not his own master, just because he was king; he was still responsible to God, just as he had always been. His situation had changed, but not his responsibility.

J. Sidlow Baxter, in speaking of Saul's earlier years, notes that never did a young man give fairer promise, or find brighter possibilities welcoming him into his life's work. He was distinguished by a striking physical superiority, and was described as being the most pleasant or agreeable (goodly) young man among his people, and stood head and shoulders above any of his fellow countrymen. Thus, his health, height, and handsomeness gave him an advantage, from the physical point of view, unequalled in all his country. It is true, of course, that the physical aspect of his being was not the most important; but it will have to be admitted that it did give

him a head start in the race for honor and achievement.

In addition to the desirable physical qualities which were his, Saul also possesses some highly commendable traits of disposition. He was modest (1 Sam. 9: 21; 10: 22); discreet (1 Sam. 10: 27); kind and generous (1 Sam. 11: 13); considerate of his father (1 Sam. 9: 5); courageous (1 Sam. 11: 6, 11); a capacity for strong love (1 Sam. 16: 21); and his opposition to such evils as familiar spirits and wizards (1 Sam. 28: 3). And along with these admirable traits of character, it may also be observed that there was no reason to suspect his moral purity in social relationships.

And then, along with these moral and physical qualities which characterized Saul, we should also keep in mind some of the special blessings which God gave to him, when he became king. Jehovah gave him another heart, which resulted in his becoming another man, with the ability to prophesy (1 Sam. 10: 6, 9, 10); the Lord also gave to him a band of trusted counsellors (1 Sam. 10: 26); Saul's chief advisor was the inspired Samuel; and Jehovah signaled the beginning of his reign by granting a spectacular military victory, which resulted in the people's having high confidence in the newly appointed king (1 Sam. 11: 6-13.)

There could therefore be no doubt about Saul's preparation and equipment for the kingship, or of Jehovah's being willing to help him; but it was up to Saul himself to see to it that he proved himself worthy of the trust which had been placed in him. This principle has been true, since Jehovah placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. And if one would like to have some purpose before him in reading the inspired history of God's dealing with his people, let him note the number of men and women whose lives justified his trust in them, and the ones who did not. Saul had a great opportunity for service in his new relationship with God and the people of his kingdom; but one has only to read the rest of the story, in order to see how miserably the first king of Israel failed.

C. Randall Barnes says that "there is not in sacred history a character

more melancholy to contemplate than that of Saul. He was naturally humble and modest, though of strong passions. His natural rashness was controlled neither by a powerful understanding nor a scrupulous conscience, and the obligations of duty and ties of gratitude, always felt by him too slightly, were totally disregarded when ambition, envy, and jealousy had taken possession of his mind. He seems never to have accepted God unconditionally and trusted him implicitly, but, as the names of his children would indicate, wavered between the worship of God and the old heathenish superstition. Now he would be under the influence of prophetic inspiration, again the slave of his common pursuits; at one time pleading with the prophet to reveal to him the will of Jehovah, at another disobeying his commands; now driving out of the land all having familiar spirits, only to consult afterward the witch of Endor. In him, also, is seen the moral anomaly or contradiction, which would be incredible did we not so often witness it, of an individual pursuing habitually a course which his better nature pronounces not only sinful but insane. (1 Sam. 24: 16-22.)"

Preparation for War with the Philistines

(1 Sam. 13: 1-4)

Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel, whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mount of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba; and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal.

The term "forty," within brackets, indicates that there is no original

word for the number, and neither is there any other definite Old Testament information regarding the length of the reign of Saul. The only way to arrive at the forty-year period is to take Paul's statement in Acts 13: 21, namely, "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."

When the elders of Israel asked for a king, they said that they wanted a leader to judge them, and

to go out before them, and fight their battles (1 Sam. 8: 20); and when Jehovah told Samuel that he was giving them a king, he said, "And he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me" (1 Sam. 9: 16). Jonathan was an outstanding general under his father, and it appears that they had no trouble in mobilizing an army, when it appeared that Israel was in imminent danger from the Philistines.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What attitude do people who make up their minds to have their own way usually manifest?
What was really behind the people's desire for a king?
What important lesson should we learn from all of this for our own application?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did the people of Israel utter the shout of the golden text?
Why was there a public, as well as a private, choosing of a king?
What spirit characterized both the people of that day and many of our day?

The Future King Revealed to Samuel

Recite the story of how Saul was led and revealed to Samuel.
In what way does the inspired penman describe Saul?
What part did the servant play in getting Saul and Samuel together?
What did both Saul and the servant do when they reached the city where Samuel was?
What lesson should we learn from all of this for our own use?
Why is it important for one to ask questions when he wants to know something?
In what way was Samuel prepared for the meeting with Saul?

Saul's Feast and Communion with Samuel

Discuss the contrast between Samuel and Saul when they first met.
What characteristics did Saul manifest in the presence of the prophet?
Recite the facts regarding the feast and Saul's communion with Samuel.
What special favors were shown to the future king at the feast?
What was Saul's status before Jehovah after he ascended the throne and why was this true?
Sum up the chief characteristics which Saul had when he became king: (1) from the physical point of view; (2) traits of disposition; and (3) the blessings which God gave him.
What was Saul's over-all reaction to his great opportunities as king?
Give a summary of his character, as one views his life as a whole.

Preparation for War with the Philistines

How long did Saul reign as king?
What lesson should we learn from this regarding the need for considering all that the Bible says about any question which is found therein?
What was the probable source of Paul's information regarding the length of Saul's reign?
What was one of the reasons which the people assigned for wanting a king?
What did God say that he would have the king do for the Israelites?
Who was Jonathan and what part did he play in the war with the Philistines?
How did the people respond to Saul's call to arms?
Why were they so willing to respond to the king's call?

Lesson III—April 20, 1969

SAMUEL'S SOLEMN ADDRESS

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 12: 1-5, 13-25

1 And Sam'-u-el said unto all Is'-ra-el, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and

grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my youth unto this day.

3 Here I am: witness against me before Je-ho'-vah, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or

whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

4 And they said, Thou has not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.

5 And he said unto them, Je-ho'-vah is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, He is witness.

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have asked for: and, behold, Je-ho'-vah hath set a king over you.

14 If ye will fear Je-ho'-vah, and serve him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Je-ho'-vah, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of Je-ho'-vah your God, *well*:

15 But if ye will not hearken unto the voice of Je-ho'-vah, but rebel against the commandment of Je-ho'-vah, then will the hand of Je-ho'-vah be against you, as it was against your fathers.

16 Now therefore stand still and see this great thing, which Je-ho'-vah will do before your eyes.

17 Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call unto Je-ho'-vah, that he may send thunder and rain; and ye

shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of Je-ho'-vah, in asking you a king.

18 So Sam'-u-el called unto Je-ho'-vah; and Je-ho'-vah sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared Je-ho'-vah and Sam'-u-el.

19 And all the people said unto Sam'-u-el, Pray for thy servants unto Je-ho'-vah thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20 And Sam'-u-el said unto the people, Fear not: ye have indeed done all this evil; yet turn not aside from following Je-ho'-vah, but serve Je-ho'-vah with all your heart:

21 And turn ye not aside; for *then would ye go* after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.

22 For Je-ho'-vah will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased Je-ho'-vah to make you a people unto himself.

23 Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Je-ho'-vah in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

24 Only fear Je-ho'-vah, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Ye said unto me. Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when Jehovah your God was your king.”* (1 Sam. 12: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 12: 6-12.

Daily Bible Readings

April 14. M.....Samuel's Call (1 Sam. 3: 1-10)
April 15. T.....Samuel's Prophetic Office (1 Sam. 3: 11-21)
April 16. W.....Samuel, a Man of Prayer (1 Sam. 8: 4-9)
April 17. T.....Samuel Speaks to the People (1 Sam. 12: 1-5)
April 18. F.....Lessons from the Past (1 Sam. 12: 6-11)
April 19. S.....Faithfulness Commended (1 Sam. 12: 12-15)
April 20. S.Samuel's Farewell Message (1 Sam. 12: 20-25)

TIME.—1095 B.C.

PLACE.—Gilgal.

PERSONS.—Samuel and the people of Israel.

Introduction

We learn from the eleventh chapter of First Samuel that Saul did not enter at once upon his duties as king, but continued his work at home. But it apparently was not

long before a startling situation arose which radically changed the life of the newly appointed king. The closing part of chapter ten records the opposition to Saul's becom-

ing king, on the part of some worthless fellows; and it appears that the young king preferred to demonstrate by his deeds that he was indeed worthy of the crown which had been bestowed upon him, rather than take notice of their opposition. And so, while at home and engaged in his agricultural pursuits, he heard of the desperate plight of the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had been threatened with the loss of their right eyes, by Nahash the king of the Ammonites, which he intended to use as a disgrace to all Israel, because they had no one to defend them. (1 Sam. 11: 1ff.)

When Saul heard of that tragic situation, he was following the oxen out of the field; and upon hearing the cry of the people of his own city Gibeah, he asked, "What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh." (1 Sam. 11: 5.) After Saul was informed of what had happened, the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and his anger was greatly kindled. He then took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent the parts by messengers throughout the borders of Israel, saying, "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." This resulted in a vast army of three hundred and thirty thousand men being raised, apparently, as quickly as the men could reach Saul. The record says that "the dread of Jehovah fell on the people, and they came out as one man." (Verse 7.) Word was then sent to the troubled men of Jabesh, promising them deliverance from their op-

pressors the next day, "by the time the sun is hot." Saul and the army made good their promise, and the Ammonites were so completely defeated and scattered, "so that not two of them were left together."

Some of the enthusiastic followers of Saul, remembering the words of the "worthless fellows," wanted to put them to death, after the great victory over the Ammonites; but Saul said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel." The new king was now seated securely upon his throne, and the people of Jabesh never forgot their debt of gratitude. The house of Saul was safe among those people, when their cause was ruined everywhere else. (Read 1 Sam. 31:

7-13.) "Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." (1 Sam. 11: 14, 15.) The assembly in Gilgal marked an important epoch in Jewish history. It ratified the work which was done in Mizpah, in choosing Saul to be king; and brought to an end the period of the judges, by formally inaugurating the new monarchy. Samuel, although he was still to retain his influence and authority as a prophet, resigned his office as judge at this meeting, and in so doing he delivered the solemn address which we are to study today.

The Golden Text

"Ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when Jehovah your God was your king." The people of Israel, of Samuel's day, were not the only professed servants of the Lord who changed their sense of values. Those people had known of the blessings of God all of their lives; and they evidently were familiar with their history, as far back as the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. They knew that they were descendants of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob; and they had every reason to believe that

God would be with them in any kind of a situation, if only they would maintain their loyalty to him. They could look back through their comparatively recent history, and count the times in which God had delivered them from their enemies; and they had no reason to doubt that he would still deliver them.

The words which serve as the golden text for today's lesson are the closing words of the devotional reading, and they should be read at this time. Samuel was in the midst of his solemn address to the people,

as he was in effect abdicating his judgeship in favor of the newly created monarchy, when he said: "And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when Jehovah your God was your king." History was repeating itself in their case. They, as already noted, had often been delivered to their enemies and punished for their sins; but when they returned to God, he always saw to it that the hold which their foes had on them was broken, and restored them to his favor. This was a blessing, however, which they did not appreciate for long at a time.

Although the Lord's people had frequently sinned in deserting him, they had never before requested a

complete and permanent change in their governmental relation to him. The time had come in their lives when they no longer appreciated the value of having God as their king. They wanted something which they could see with their physical eyes; and what was true of them is, to a large extent, also true of many of us today. If one will only read the New Testament, it will not take him long to see what the true values of life really are. This is the real burden of Matthew 6: 24-34; and that passage should be read often. In another place, Jesus said, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matt. 16: 26; cf. Luke 12: 13-21; 16: 19-31.)

The Text Explained

Samuel Testifies and the People Confirm His Integrity

(1 Sam. 12: 1-5)

And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my youth unto this day. Here I am: witness against me before Jehovah, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, Jehovah is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, He is witness.

When one begins the reading of Samuel's speech, which he delivered on the occasion of this lesson, he will have to admit that he is face to face with one of the most remarkable utterances on record. Here was a man who had spent a lifetime in judging the people of Israel (cf. 1 Sam. 7: 15), and when the time

came for him to turn his administrative duties over to the king, he challenged the most minute inquiry into every act of his administration. He called upon any and every one, who had ever brought a case before him for judgment, to state whether or not he felt that any injustice had been done, or that any abuse had been experienced. Standing in the open assembly, he called upon God to witness that his hands were clean, and that uprightness and integrity had guided the whole course of official life. Jamieson notes that history does scarcely anywhere present a more striking example of the moral sublime. Adam Clarke, in commenting on his part of the lesson text, says: "Did ever a minister of state, in any part of the world, resign his office with so much self-consciousness of integrity, backed with the universal approbation of the public? No man was oppressed under his government, no man defrauded! He had accumulated no riches for himself; he had procured none for his friends; nor had any one needy dependent been provided for out of the *public purse*. He might have pardoned his own sons, who had acted improperly, before he quitted the government; but though he was the most tender of parents, he would not, but abandoned them to national justice, with only a tacit solicitation of mercy:

Behold, my sons are with you! They have acted improperly; I deprived them of their authority; they are amenable to you for their past conduct; I have walked uprightly and disinterestedly among you; they have not followed my steps: but can you forgive them for their father's sake? As a *minister of justice*, he abandons them to their fate; as a *tender father*, he indirectly and modestly pleads for them on the ground of his own services. Had he not acted thus in both these relations, he would have been unworthy of that character which he so deservedly bears."

Although Samuel lived before the sunlight of Christianity dawned upon the earth, his life was above reproach, in all of its relationships; and there was not a man in Israel, from the king to the humblest citizen, who so much as intimated that the old man had ever acted improperly with any man, or in any relationship. Even God who knows the hearts of all men gave Samuel a perfect record; and one has only to turn to the New Testament to see something of the greatness of his faith. (Heb. 11: 32ff.) We have in the lesson now under consideration an example of judicial steadfastness or stability, and personal integrity, which every man in authority, from elders in the church and on down, should study carefully and endeavor to emulate.

His Authority As a Teacher Miraculously Made Known

(1 Sam. 12: 13-18)

Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have asked for: and, behold, Jehovah hath set a king over you. If ye will fear Jehovah, and serve him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of Jehovah your God, well: but if ye will not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah, but rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, then will the hand of Jehovah be against you, as it was against your fathers. Now therefore stand still and see this great thing, which Jehovah will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto Je-

hovah, that he may send thunder and rain; and ye shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of Jehovah, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto Jehovah; and Jehovah sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared Jehovah and Samuel.

After the people had unqualifiedly endorsed Samuel and his administration, he then called upon them to "stand still, that I may plead with you before Jehovah concerning all the righteous acts of Jehovah, which he did to you and to your fathers." (See verse 7.) The prophet then cited examples from their history, from the time the people left the land of Egypt to the time that Samuel was speaking to them, to show that Jehovah had always delivered his people from their enemies. When they sinned, it was necessary for God to punish them; but when they turned to him again, he raised up leaders, "and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and ye dwelt in safety. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when Jehovah your God was your king."

The whole purpose of this solemn, faithful, and uncompromising address, which Samuel delivered on the occasion now before us, was to show the people that although they had obtained the change in the form of government which they so foolishly demanded, their conduct was highly displeasing to the Lord. However, the retiring judge assured the people that if they would remain faithful to Jehovah (he was not resigning his authority over them), and to the principles of the theocracy, they would still enjoy God's favor and protection from their enemies: but if not, then the hand of Jehovah would be against them, as it had been against their fathers. No one, not even now, can evade God's justice by endeavoring to shake off his dominion. Those who will not accept Jehovah as king, must accept him as judge; and that goes for all the people of the world. (Acts 17: 30, 31.)

After warning the people as to what would happen to them if they disobeyed the commandment of Je-

hovah, Samuel called attention to the cloudless day of the wheat harvest season, and told the people that God would give them a sign, great enough to cause them to see the enormity of their sin, in asking for a human ruler to rule over them, instead of their Divine King. Bible students tell us that rain, accompanied by lightning and thunder, was rarely seen at that season of the year; such phenomena belonged to the winter months. That is why Josephus called the sign which Samuel asked for "a winter storm in the midst of harvest." This event, so extraordinary at that season of the year, terrified the people to the extent that they immediately confessed their latest sin, namely, that of rejecting the divine order, and asking for a human king. They were also moved to manifest great fear toward both Jehovah and Samuel.

Confession of Sin and Divine Reassurance

(1 Sam. 12: 19-25)

And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have indeed done all this evil; yet turn not aside from following Jehovah, but serve Jehovah with all your heart: and turn ye not aside; for then would ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For Jehovah will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you a people unto himself. 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. Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

God has always required that people confess, that is acknowledge or admit, that they have sinned, before forgiveness is extended to them. This principle is emphasized in both the Old and the New Testa-

ments, as may be seen by reading the following passages:

"If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far off or near; yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn again, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captive, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have dealt wickedly; . . . then hear thou their prayer and the supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause; and forgive thy people who have sinned against thee." (1 Kings 8: 46-53.) "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 9.) Confession of sin is absolutely essential to forgiveness. (James 5: 16.)

The miracle, or great sign from heaven, which Samuel asked for and which was performed, had its desired effect on the people; but the prophet wanted them to understand that its purpose was not to frighten them away from Jehovah; but to make them realize that they had sinned against him. And when they had been brought to confess their sin in asking for a king, it was then in order to try to draw them closer to the Lord.

It should be observed that Samuel did not seek to make the people feel that they were excusable in their attitude in asking for a king; they had indeed been guilty of an enormous transgression; but since they had acknowledged it, Jehovah would forgive them, and bless them as his people. This is one of the great examples of the mercy of God. If that were not the Divine disposition, then none of us could live before him. However, it is always essential to keep in mind the fact that God can bless his people, only when they get themselves right with him; there is no other alternative, and there is no other one who can save. This was a lesson which the children of Israel never fully learned, until they went through the ordeal of the Babylonian captivity.

We are indeed living in a sinful

world today, and if we fully understood God's purposes, we would realize that many of the troublesome and painful experiences through which we are passing, are intended to bring us to repentance, and to a closer walk with the Lord. (Cf. Luke 21: 25-28; Rev. 16: 1-11.) It is not God's will that his people, and those who are potentially his people, live peacefully in a sinful world. He wants them to be disturbed by such conditions, and not to become satisfied to continue in a life in a wicked world. Peter says that the Lord's people ought to look for and earnestly desire 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. But according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Pet. 3: 10-13.)

The story is told of a man who was led by its owner, rebuilder, and renovator, through the rooms and gardens of a lovely house which, with infinite thought and discretion, had been reclaimed from decay, and made fair and beautiful. At every step, indoors and out, was something charming or adequate, whether furniture or porcelain, whether flower or shrub. Within were long, cool passages, where through the diamond panes sunlight splashed on the white walls, and bedrooms of the gayest daintiness; without were lawns, vistas, and arrangements of the loveliest colors. When the tour was completed, the hostess asked her guest, "Well, what do you think of it all?" The visitor thought many things, but only expressed that which was uppermost in his mind, which was this, "You are making it very hard to die." Most people love the beautiful, but that alone will not suffice in a wicked world. God does not want his people to live for ever in sin, and it is for that reason that he often makes their surroundings unpleasant for them.

Notwithstanding the fact that the people of Israel had rejected Samuel, as their God-appointed leader,

the prophet still felt that it would be a sin against Jehovah, on his part, if he should cease to pray for the people. This is an example which all of God's people should seek to imitate. How many elders and preachers have had the experience of being rejected by the people whom they were trying to serve, and lead in the service of God, and who, instead of becoming angry and bitter, and denouncing them, have gone to God in sincere and honest prayer for them? When people earnestly and sincerely pray for others, even their enemies, they cannot mistreat them; but will, on the contrary, endeavor to bless them.

While it was Samuel's duty to pray for the people who had rejected him, it was also his duty to instruct them in the good and in the right way. It often happens that religious teachers today, after those whom they are trying to teach the way of the Lord, show a disposition to reject their teaching, say in effect, if not in reality, that they have no further obligation regarding them. If one is not exceedingly careful, it will be easy for him to allow the evil conduct of others to draw him away from the Lord. This was the spirit manifested by Paul, when he freely forgave the offender in Corinth, who had caused him so much trouble; and the apostle said that he manifested this spirit "that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor. 2: 5-11; cf. 11: 4, 5.)

This great address by Samuel to the people of Israel reminds us somewhat of two similar addresses by Joshua, as he was preparing to go the way of all the earth. (Josh. 23; 24; and also the farewell addresses of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy.) Samuel, in effect, was calling upon the people to assume the obligation of practical religion and serious godliness. The term "fear" is used here in the sense of *reverence*, that is, of showing the proper respect for Jehovah. Faithfulness is always rewarded by the Lord; but sin is a reproach to any people.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction
When and under what circumstances did
Saul begin his active duties as king?

In what way was the newly appointed king aroused to action?
 How did he go about raising his army and with what result?
 Why did the people respond to the king's call so readily?
 What benevolent attitude did Saul manifest after the battle was over?
 For what was the meeting in Gilgal noted?

The Golden Text

What characteristic did the people of Israel manifest during the period of this lesson?
 Why is it so easy for people to lose or change their sense of values?
 Under what circumstance did Samuel speak the words of the golden text?
 What lesson should we learn from the experience of Israel for our own good?

Samuel Testifies and the People Confirm His Integrity

What is the nature and character of the address which Samuel delivered on this occasion?
 In what way did he challenge the people to whom he spoke?
 What was the evident effect which the address had on the people?
 What is the value of the attitude which Samuel manifested to us?
 What do we know of that great man's faith?

His Authority As a Teacher Miraculously Made Known

What did Samuel say and do after the people gave him their unqualified endorsement?

In what way did the prophet illustrate and reinforce his lesson to the people?
 What was the principal purpose of the address?
 What assurance did he give his hearers?
 Why are people always responsible to God?
 What sign did Samuel ask for and received to emphasize his remarks?
 Why was thunder and rain so unusual at that time of the year?
 What effect did that miracle have on the people?

Confession of Sin and Divine Reassurance

Why is it always necessary for one to confess his sin before forgiveness can be bestowed?
 Why can't forgiveness be granted to those who will not confess their sins?
 Show that this is the teaching of the entire Bible.
 What did Samuel say and do, following the reaction of the people to the miraculous demonstration?
 Does God ever try to scare people away from him? Give reasons for your answer.
 What do we learn in this part of the lesson regarding the mercy of Jehovah?
 Why were the children of Israel so long in learning not to forsake God for false deities?
 What is one of the reasons for so much trouble in a sinful world?
 How and why does Jehovah deal with his people in this respect? Cite some examples.
 How did Samuel feel toward the people who had rejected him and why?
 What New Testament example do we have of this same attitude?

Lesson IV—April 27, 1969

SAUL DISOBEYS AND IS REJECTED

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 15: 10-23

10 Then came the word of Je-ho'-vah unto Sam'-u-el, saying,

11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And Sam'-u-el was wroth; and he cried unto Je-ho'-vah all night.

12 And Sam'-u-el rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Sam'-u-el, saying, Saul came to Car'-mel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gil'-gal.

13 And Sam'-u-el came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Je-ho'-vah: I have performed the commandment of Je-ho'-vah.

14 And Sam'-u-el said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Am'-a-lek-ites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Je-ho'-vah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Sam'-u-el said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Je-ho'-vah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Sam'-u-el said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Is'-ra-el? And Je-ho'-vah anointed thee king over Is'-ra-el;

18 And Je-ho'-vah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Am'-a-lek-ites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not

obey the voice of Je-ho'-vah; but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'-vah?

20 And Saul said unto Sam'u-el, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Je-ho'-vah, and have gone the way which Je-ho'-vah sent me, and have brought A'-gag the king of Am'-a-lek, and have utterly destroyed the Am'-a-lek-ites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the de-

voted things, to sacrifice unto Je-ho'-vah thy God in Gil-gal.

22 And Sam'u-el said, Hath Je-ho'-vah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Je-ho'-vah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and ter'-a-phim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Je-ho'-vah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”* (1 Sam. 15: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 15: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

April 21. M.....	Saul's Foolish Ways (1 Sam. 13: 8-14)
April 22. T.....	Saul's Disobedience (1 Sam. 15: 10-16)
April 23. W.....	Saul's Rejection (1 Sam. 15: 17-26)
April 24. T.....	Disobedience Leads to Failure (Isa. 42: 18-25)
April 25. F.....	Faithfulness Leads to Triumph (Luke 5: 1-11)
April 26. S.....	Apostasy through Disobedience (Heb. 6: 1-8)
April 27. S.....	Two Sauls at Death (1 Sam. 31: 1-6; 2 Tim. 4: 7-18)

TIME.—1079 B.C.

PLACE.—Gilgal.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Samuel, and Saul.

Introduction

If one will consider the life of Saul, from the time he first appears in biblical history, till the day of his death, he will have no difficulty in concluding that his is one of the saddest stories in the entire Bible. His beginning was both humble and promising, but haughty and disobedient at the end. He may be rightly classed as one of the greater men of the Bible; but his place in inspired history is so completely surrounded by men who were much greater than he, that a study of his life cannot be made apart from theirs. James Hastings notes that as if to throw a stronger light on the character of the unhappy Saul by comparison and contrast, the Scriptures present him along with Samuel, the man of prayer, David, the man after God's own heart, and Jonathan, so lovely and so truly great. Saul might have prayed like Samuel, he might have waited upon God as David did, and might have loved with largeness of heart as Jonathan did; but alas! he apparently did none of these. Instead, the story of the first king of Israel is one of the

downward progress of the soul. His life was a succession of gradual changes; and in his many trials which plagued his life as king, evil consistently prevailed over the spirit of grace and opportunities for good. As a day which begins with sunshine, and then becomes overcast with gloom, until at last it closes with a storm; so was the life of Saul the son of Kish.

Saul prospered for a period of about two years as king over Israel, under the guidance of the Spirit of Jehovah; but then came his time of trial. The people of Israel had reached the point in their subjugation to the Philistines, when they had to throw off that yoke. But Saul was not equal to the occasion; for he either did not realize the necessity for complete obedience to God, or did not want to manifest such allegiance. His first act of disobedience is recorded in 1 Samuel 13: 1-15a. Jonathan, Saul's son, smote a garrison of the Philistines, and the latter assembled themselves together to fight against the people of Israel. It appears that Samuel

had told Saul to wait seven days, until he, that is, Samuel, would come to the place where Saul was, and offer a sacrifice before the king and his army entered the conflict. The Philistines, in the meantime, were busily engaged in preparing for the battle; and when the Israelites saw what their enemies were doing, they became terror-stricken and began to forsake Saul. The king himself grew impatient, when he saw that Samuel was late in arriving in Gilgal, and decided to take matters into his own hand and offer the sacrifice himself. Saul's lack of faith resulted in his sin of presumption, for which the kingdom was ultimately taken away from him; and Samuel, having arrived and rebuked the king for his presumptuous action, left him to pursue his own headstrong way.

The extent of Israel's subjugation to the Philistines, Saul's rash oath, Jonathan's salvation from it, some of Saul's victories, and the names of the members of his family are recorded in 1 Samuel 13: 15b-14: 52, which should be read.

Saul's second act of disobedience is described in the verses which immediately precede the lesson text

for today. Jehovah had decreed vengeance against the Amalekites, because of their attack on the Israelites, as they were leaving the land of Egypt, on their way to Sinai (Ex. 17: 8-15); and Saul was commissioned to inflict the punishment, and was given detailed instructions regarding the procedure which he was to follow. He was told to destroy the Amalekites completely; but it is plain from the text that he did not follow his instruction. 'And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the failings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.' (1 Sam. 15: 8, 9.) There is a lesson here in the narrative regarding Saul, which every person today should learn, namely, God expects implicit obedience on the part of those who would claim his promises; he positively will not permit any person, regardless of who he may be, to substitute his will for that of the Lord.

The Golden Text

This part of the lesson is found in the principal text and it will be dealt with in its proper place.

The Text Explained

Jehovah's Attitude toward Saul Made Known to Samuel (1 Sam. 15: 10-12)

Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And Samuel was wroth; and he cried unto Jehovah all night. And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal.

Jehovah is said to "repent" when wicked men cause him to change his attitude and course of procedure with reference to them. This is to say that he deals with them as if he had actually repented, that is,

changed his mind toward them, with reference to all the kindness which he had manifested toward them. The same original word for "repent" is also found in verse 29, where Samuel says, "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent." The meaning in the passage just quoted is that Jehovah is not changeable, and will not therefore be untrue to the promises, which he made concerning his people. When the term "repent" is applied to God, as in the text now under consideration, the technical word for that use is *anthropomorphism*, and it means, according to *The Random House Dictionary*, an anthropomorphic conception ascribed to Deity, or, which is the same thing, the ascription of human form and attributes to a being which is not human. The use

of anthropomorphic language in the Bible is intended to bridge the great chasm between the infinite and finite minds. Just as we adapt ourselves to the conceptions of a child, in an effort to get him to understand us, so the Scriptures employ anthropomorphic language, when it is necessary to bridge the gulf between God and human beings.

The attitude and action which was manifested by Samuel, was in keeping with his declared intention to pray for those who run counter to God's will. "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; cf. 2 Pet. 3: 9.) More praying on the part of the Lord's people today, and less criticism and indifference, might result in turning many to the Lord's way of doing things.

But while Samuel was praying in bitterness of soul, Saul was acting in character, with apparently no thought of humbly seeking the Lord's forgiveness. The monument he set up was probably a kind of "triumphal arch," or maybe a *hand* pointing to the place of that which he considered a great victory. (See marginal note; cf. 2 Sam. 18: 18.) The haughty king was evidently thinking more of his own accomplishments, than of the glory of God.

The Meeting between Samuel and Saul

(1 Sam. 15: 13-16)

And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the A male kites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

It is easy to see that Saul attempted to conciliate Samuel with a friendly greeting, but it is hardly

probable that he had gone so far in sin, as to make him insensible to his disobedience. Or, it is not likely that his conscience was so hardened, as to make him feel that he had done no work. But in spite of the fact that, deep down in his heart, he knew he had disobeyed that which Jehovah commanded him to do, he brazenly said to Samuel, "Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah." It is a desperately unfavorable index to one's character, when he can shamelessly say, I am faithfully serving the Lord, while knowing all the time that he has set aside something which he has commanded. The matter is expressed by James in these words: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law." (James 2: 10, 11; cf. Heb. 10: 28f.)

Saul's profession of obedience was loud, but the circumstantial evidence was against him. All that Samuel had to do, in order to let the king know that he knew that he had not done that which Jehovah commanded, was to ask a question, namely, If you have done that which God authorized, then what is the meaning of that which I hear? There are many professed Christians today who boast of their obedience to the will of the Lord; but their indulgence in the flesh, their love of the world, their passion and unkindness, and their neglect of, or positive disregard for, specific duties testify against them. That which one does often makes a greater impression, than that which he says.

Although Saul was the king, and the army which destroyed the Amalekites was under his personal command, yet he sought to shift the blame for his disobedience in failing to carry out God's command to the people. But that could not be done; and it is doubtful that even Saul himself really felt that way about the matter. A religious motive, however pious, can never compensate for disobedience. It sometime happens that a man who oppresses the poor, and engages in trickery and robbery, by taking advantage of

those who cannot help themselves and are forced to pay exorbitant interest, will attempt to salve his conscience by giving a part of the proceeds to the church! But Saul and the people utterly destroyed that which they did not want to save, just as many professed followers of the Lord gladly emphasize, and vigorously execute, some duties to which they are favorably inclined, in order to atone for some glaring sin.

While Samuel, who was both humble and faithful to the Lord, was trying to fulfill his obligation in passing Jehovah's word to the disobedient king, Saul apparently manifested a spirit of contempt toward the prophet. When Samuel said to the king, "Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah said to me this night," it is as Saul replied, "O. K., let's hear it!" Saul probably knew that Samuel would condemn his action, and so, with a defiant spirit, he bade him say on. Many faithful gospel preachers have had to stand before "influential" members of the church, and tell them that which God wants them to know, when those who should be listening, with a view to learning the will of the Lord for them, manifest only an attitude of pity (?) and condescension. And like Samuel, such preachers often have to stand alone, but they are not alone; for the Lord is with them. (See John 16: 32; cf. Matt. 28: 20.)

The Rejection of Saul As King

(1 Sam. 15: 17-23)

And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel; and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then hast thou not obeyed the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted

things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

When Samuel reminded Saul of the attitude which he had toward himself at the beginning, he probably referred to that which the latter said at their first meeting. The prophet intimated that there might be great things in store for the young man, and Saul replied, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner." (1 Sam. 9: 21; cf. 10: 21, 22.) Benjamin, indeed, was not only the youngest of Jacob's children; the tribe itself was almost wiped out by the other tribes. (Read the last two chapters of the Book of Judges.) Saul's real trouble, however, like that of so many others, was his inability to stand up under real prosperity. This is especially true of those whose beginnings were humble, as in the case of the first king of Israel. Matthew Henry notes that those who are advanced to honor and wealth, ought to remember often their mean beginnings, so that they may never think highly of themselves, but always study to do great things for God who has advanced them. (Cf. James 1: 17.)

We should always remember, in studying a lesson like this one, that Saul, although the king of Israel, was still subject to the will of God. He was simply an instrument in the hands of Jehovah, to accomplish his holy purposes; and when he sent Saul to destroy the Amalekites, that was simply a method of punishing those who had sinned against him. It was true then, as it is now, that the wages of sin is death. Jehovah is never vindictive in his dealings with the human race; but when wicked people reach the point where they become cancers in their relations to other nations, the dis-

ease must be wholly exterminated. God's benevolent design for mankind made it necessary for him to destroy the sinful Amalekites, because of their wicked effect on the people of God. (Read Num. 24: 20; 1 Sam. 15: 1, 3.)

And so, as Samuel came to the real issue, as it respected Saul, he asked, "Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah?" These were searching questions, and the principle involved is just as applicable now, as it was then. When any one receives a command from the Lord, it is essential that he make every effort to do that which the directive involves; he must not allow any other motive to influence his thinking and acting.

But when professed followers of the Lord are bent on having their own way regarding alleged obedience, they rarely ever admit their failure to do all that which is commanded; and when changes are made in God's requirements, such people usually try to make it appear that the alterations which they introduce, in no way detract from that which God stipulated. This principle is clearly illustrated by such practices as substituting sprinkling and pouring for baptism, and the addition of mechanical instruments of music in the worship which has been divinely prescribed. (Cf. Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16.) When Saul said that he had gone the way which Jehovah sent him, he failed to say that only his feet went; his heart went elsewhere, and there can be no true obedience apart from the heart. The "devoted things" which the people brought back with them, were the things which had been devoted to destruction. Their religious motive to sacrifice unto Jehovah, however, would not justify their rebellious conduct; and what was true then, is just as true now.

The difference between burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and in obeying the voice of Jehovah, is the difference between outward forms of service, and the devotion of the heart. God is pleased only when the worshipper's will is brought into subjection to the divine will; and when that is done, the heart will be

right, and all that one does will be made to conform to the divine standard. (Cf. Mic. 6: 6-8; Hos. 6: 6.) God is glorified, and self is denied, more by heart-felt obedience, than by outward forms of sacrifice. It was much easier for the people of that day to bring a sheep or an ox to be burnt upon the altar, than to bring every thought into obedience to God; and we should know that the same principle is just as true now, as it was then. (Cf. 2 Cor. 10: 5.)

Obedience is one of the cardinal principles of the Bible. There has never been an age, since mankind has been upon the earth, when one could please God without obeying him. This knowledge should lead every one to ask himself the question, What, then, does it mean for one to obey God? Webster defines obedience to mean "compliance with command, prohibition, or known law and rule of duty prescribed; the performance of what is required or enjoined by authority, or the abstaining from what is prohibited, in compliance with the command or prohibition. To constitute obedience, the act or forbearance to act must be in submission to authority; the command must be known to the person, and his compliance must be in consequence of it, or it is not obedience."

That which has just been said is enough to show that obedience is something which must be learned; for it is natural for the human will to assert itself. This can be seen in early child life, as for example, a child sees a coal of fire and wants it; but he must be taught that he cannot handle such an object without harm to himself. If a child did not learn such lessons of obedience in early life, it would not be long before he would destroy himself. It has already been pointed out that the essence of obedience is willing submission to properly constituted authority. And if one will stop to think, he can easily see that it is possible for one to do some things which God has commanded, without in the least degree obeying him. For example, he may act because of the pressure of circumstances, because of some end which he seeks to gain, as in business or social circles, or because his reason suggests that

it is the proper thing for him to do.

It is therefore primarily for the reason just assigned, that God has always had some test of obedience, some way by which he could determine man's loyalty to him. No man has the right to claim that he has obeyed God, unless he has been properly motivated with reference to that which he does in carrying that which has been divinely commanded. Any thoughtful person can see a reason for many of the things which God has authorized for his children, and it is, of course, possible for him to do exactly that which has been commanded, because he wants to please God; but that, in and of itself, does not necessarily test his faithfulness to God. If our faith in, and our loyalty to, God is to be adequately tested, there must be no apparent connection between the act which has been commanded, and the result promised; and there should be no outside circumstance impelling us. The only moving cause should be our reverence for God, and our devotion to him.

Jehovah always seeks for man's present and eternal good, while Satan is for ever seeking his present and eternal ruin. Every thoughtful person will readily admit that all of God's commands for the peoples of the earth grow out of the human race's need. (Cf. Jer. 10: 23.) It is for this reason that God, in his

mercy and benevolence, supplies man's most urgent and fundamental needs, by directing his steps. It is, however, unfortunate that some religious teachers have endeavored to place the grace of God on one side, and his commands on the other, thereby making them antagonistic to each other. These men have further taught that if one obeys God's prescribed conditions for salvation, he is not depending upon the grace of God; and that if he depends upon God's grace, the keeping of the commandments is a matter of no consequence. This, however, is not true, as every person not blinded by false theories will readily admit.

Samuel pointed out to Saul that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim." Thus, for one to be stubborn and rebellious is equivalent to setting up false gods, and worshipping them, and engaging in witchcraft. The "teraphim" probably had reference to household gods, maybe images of ancestors. (Cf. Gen. 31: 19, 32-35; 1 Sam. 19: 13.) It is doubtful if many people who are guilty of rebellion and stubbornness are aware of the danger which is theirs. Such characteristics serve as an index to the condition of the heart; and it is always true that where one's heart is, there will also be the object of his devotion.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What impression does the life of Saul make on Bible readers?
What general course did his attitude and actions take.
What two outstanding acts of disobedience did he commit?
What made the two acts disobedience?
What lesson should we learn from these things?
What is the principal value which we get from the study of the Old Testament?
What must always be the relationship of the will of the obedient to the will of God?

Jehovah's Attitude toward Saul Made Known to Samuel

In what sense did Jehovah "repent" with reference to Saul?
What is the basic meaning of repentance?
What effect did God's revelation to Samuel regarding Saul have on the prophet?

What was Saul doing while Samuel was praying?

The Meeting between Samuel and Saul

What did Saul apparently try to do when he saw Samuel approaching?
What was happening to Saul's character all the time these things were taking place?
How can one judge regarding his own character by considering the truths of this lesson?
What happens when one disregards or sets aside anything which God has commanded?
In what way did Samuel let Saul know that he knew that he had disobeyed Jehovah?
Why isn't profession alone sufficient to indicate one's acceptance with God?
Why was Saul held responsible for the failure to destroy the Amalekites, rather than the army?
Why can't a religious motive compensate for one's disobedience?
What attitude did Saul apparently manifest toward Samuel, while the latter was

trying to prepare the king for the message from Jehovah?
 What important lesson is suggested by this circumstance for us?

Why did Jehovah command Saul to destroy the Amalekites?
 What lesson do we learn from this?
 How did Samuel come to the real issue in his message to Saul?
 What usually happens when professed followers of the Lord are bent on having their way?
 What difference does God make between outward service and inward obedience?
 Discuss the principles of obedience as they are set forth in the Bible.

The Rejection of Saul As King
 Of what did Samuel remind Saul, as he revealed God's will toward the latter?
 How may one know from these circumstances what he should always try to do?
 What relationship did Saul still have with God after he became king, and why was this true?

Lesson V—May 4, 1969

DAVID, ISRAEL'S SECOND KING

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 16: 1-12

1 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Sam'-u-el, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Is-ra-el? fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jes'-se the Beth'-le-hem-ite; for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Sam'-u-el said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And Je-ho'-vah said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to Je-ho'-vah.

3 And call Jes'-se to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

4 And Sam'-u-el did that which Je-ho'-vah spake, and came to Beth'-le-hem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Je-ho'-vah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jes'-se and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on E-li'-ab, and said, Surely Je-ho'-vah's anointed

is before him.

7 But Je-ho'-vah said unto Sam'-u-el, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Je-ho'-vah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Je-ho'-vah looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jes'-se called A-bin'-a-dab, and made him pass before Sam'-u-el. And he said, Neither hath Je-ho'-vah chosen this.

9 Then Jes'-se made Sham'-mah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath Je-ho'-vah chosen this.

10 And Jes'-se made seven of his sons to pass before Sam'-u-el. And Sam'-u-el said unto Jes'-se, Je-ho'-vah hath not chosen these.

11 And Sam'-u-el said unto Jes'-se, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Sam'-u-el said unto Jes'-se, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Je-ho'-vah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul.” (1 Sam. 18: 30.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.— 1 Sam. 16: 14-23.

Daily Bible Readings

April 28. M.....	David, Israel's Second King (Psalm 89: 19-28)
April 29. T.....	Jehovah Selects David (1 Sam. 16: 10-12)
April 30. W.....	David's Great Faith (Psalm 27: 1-14)
May 1. T.....	God's Covenant with David (Psalm 132: 1-11)
May 2. F.....	David Anointed (1 Sam. 16: 1-13)
May 3. S.....	David's Reign (2 Sam. 7: 18-26)
May 4. S.....	David's Twenty-sixth Psalm (Psalm 26: 1-12)

TIME.—1063 B.C.

PLACES.—Ramah and Bethlehem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Samuel, Jesse, and his sons.

Introduction

It was pointed out in a previous lesson that any claim which Saul might have had for greatness was always overshadowed by men who were greater than he. But when we pass to the study of his successor on the throne, the very reverse is true. Not only did David rise above Saul in every moral standard; there never was another king of God's people, here upon the earth, who reached the height to which David attained. And to David only belongs the distinction of typifying the greatest of all kings, his son, according to the flesh, and successor, the Lord Jesus Christ, who sits today upon the throne which is called by David's name, and which is in heaven itself. (Acts 2: 29-31; Luke 1: 30-33; cf. Psalm 89: 35-37; Dan. 7: 13, 14; Isa. 9: 6, 7.)

Hastings in introducing a series of studies on the life and character of David, notes that a nation has rarely associated all of his attributes with the life of a single man. But we find a people in the Hebrews who, through long centuries of their history and through devious changes of their fortune, consistently and persistently agreeing to heap upon a single individual the aggregate glories of every profession of life. Israel has, accordingly, fixed her affections upon an ideal whose very name expresses the basis for uniting all desires, namely, David the beloved. But to claim one man as the object of all national desires and

realizations, is a claim which is not easily sustained. It can be supported only upon the supposition that this one man has passed through every national experience, has filled every sphere, and has partaken of every circumstance, which belongs to the people in question.

But as we take this wide view of the life and character of the second king of Israel, we note that he is not simply the greatest of the rulers of Israel; he is the man who is greatest in everything else. For example, he monopolized all of her institutions; he was her shepherd boy or the representative of all her toiling classes; and her musician or the successor of Miriam and Deborah. He was the soldier, the conqueror of all the Goliaths who would steal her peace and bring her children into bondage. He was her king, the one who numbered her armies and regulated her polity. He was her priest (figuratively, since he could not be a literal priest), who substituted a broken and contrite spirit for the blood of bulls and rams. He was her prophet, who predicted with his latest breath the perpetuity of his kingdom; and he was her poet, with the volume of her psalms called by his name. In short, David was, in the estimation of Israel, the man who personified the nation itself, being the embodiment of her enduring qualities, the incarnation of her spirit, and the type of her very destiny.

The Golden Text

"David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul." The immediate context of the words just quoted is as follows: "Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by." This passage is the closing part of the eighteenth chapter of First Samuel; and if the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters are read together, it will be easy for one to understand the

background against which the words of the golden text were written. After David had successfully removed Goliath, the Philistine challenger, from the scene of action, Saul's interest in the son of Jesse was greatly renewed. But when the king heard the women ascribing ten thousands to David, but only thousands to him, his jealousy of the latter knew no bounds; in fact, nothing short of the death of David would satisfy Saul. "And Saul eyed David from that day and forward." (1 Sam. 18: 9.)

At his first opportunity, Saul made a direct, personal effort to kill David with a spear; but David was able to escape the king's wrath on two occasions. "And Saul was afraid of David, because Jehovah was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them." (1 Sam. 18: 12-16.)

After Saul's failure to kill David himself, or have him killed in battle, his next step was a subtle attempt to get the young man slain by the Philistines, while attempting to meet the king's requirement for a dowry, so that David could marry one of Saul's daughters. When the question was placed before David, he immediately let it be known that he did not feel equal to the occasion; and when Saul learned of the young captain's reaction, he sent him this message: "The king desireth not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies."

And the inspired historian added, "Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines." But when David learned what dowry was expected, he was pleased; and he arose, took his men with him, and in a very short time slew two hundred Philistines, and was able to deliver twice the amount of dowry which had been set. Michal, the daughter of Saul, was then given to David in marriage; but Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and was his enemy continually. (1 Sam. 18: 22-29.)

It is easy to see, from the example of God, what it means for one to behave himself wisely; or, which is the same thing, to do those things which are proper and right. This, of course, presupposes some knowledge of the standard by which such conduct is measured, and of one's determination to act accordingly. (Cf. 1 Tim. 3: 14, 15.) Any one who lives according to this principle will have the favor of both God and man. The Lord's people should always endeavor to demonstrate the spirit and practice of Christian fellowship, and genuine interest in the salvation of those who are out of Christ. They should always strive to be wiser than those who are about them. (Cf. Matt. 5: 46-48; Luke 16: 8.)

The Text Explained

A New Mission for Samuel

(1 Sam. 16: 1-3)

And Jehovah said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons, And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And Jehovah said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I have come to sacrifice to Jehovah. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

The closing words of the chapter from which the last lesson was taken are as follows: "And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: for Samuel mourned for Saul: and Jehovah re-

pented that he had made Saul king over Israel." (1 Sam. 15: 35.) The rebellious and self-willed Saul, whose course was rapidly descending toward the fatal battlefield of Gilboa (1 Sam. 31: 1, 6) had proved himself a complete failure as Jehovah's viceroy over his people; and the Lord could no longer retain him in that position. He did, however, continue as king in name, until his sin worked out its sad end; but God had selected another man to take his place, and Samuel was authorized to anoint him as the new king. Samuel's grief on account of Saul's rejection demonstrated the amiable feelings of the man; but those feelings were at variance with his public duty as a prophet. The declared purpose of Jehovah to transfer the kingdom of Israel from Saul to a better man was not a vindictive move on his part, but a fixed and

immutable decree; and it was God's will that his faithful servant Samuel have a part in effecting the change.

When Samuel asked, How can I go? and added, If Saul hear it, he will kill me, the prophet was not manifesting a lack of faith in Jehovah, and an unwillingness to obey his commandment; but was apparently asking for more information. And when people come to God in that spirit, he is neither displeased with them nor does he deny their request. (Cf. James 1: 5-8.) Some men have seized upon God's answer to Samuel, and have endeavored to make it appear that it authorized Samuel to practice duplicity and deceit. But if one will carefully consider the facts in the case, it will not be difficult for him to see that it was rather a plan whereby the prophet could conceal that which he was under no obligation to make known to the public. God's words to Samuel authorized no effort on the part of the prophet to mislead any person, nor to do that which he would not have done, had the whole truth been known to him. It is certainly a crime for one to practice concealment, for the purpose of taking unfair advantage over a person, or to bring about an unworthy situation involving the rights of another; but for one to conceal that which he is in no way obligated to reveal, when some important aim is to be gained, is quite a different thing.

Furthermore, if one is willing to consider all the facts in the case, it will not be difficult for him to see that, strictly speaking, Samuel did offer a sacrifice; and it does not appear that he could have succeeded in doing that which he had been commissioned to do, without offering the sacrifice and calling the elders of the city, and Jesse and his sons, to it. It is altogether possible that Jehovah did not mention the sacrifice at first, so that the information regarding it could be used to reassure the prophet, who was fully aware of the danger which he mentioned, unless he had the protection of Jehovah. At any rate, the offering of the sacrifice in Bethlehem was one purpose for which Samuel went to that city, but it was not the principal purpose which was before him. If he had revealed the principal design of his visit, evil and not

good probably would have resulted; but he could reveal a secondary design, and still remain in the realm of absolute truth.

The last verse of the Book of Ruth informs us that Jesse was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, the beautiful gleaner and satisfied stranger, who left her home, her family, and her religion in the land of Moab, and came to Bethlehem with the widowed and childless Naomi, where she married the wealthy farmer Boaz, and became an ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Matt. 1: 1-5.)

The Plan for Anointing Another King

(1 Sam. 16: 4, 5)

And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

The little town of Bethlehem, situated on its high ridge overlooking the wilderness of Judaea, had never had an important part in the eager life of the Hebrew people; yet all through the ages some event, notable in history—some death, or birth, or some prophetic word, drew the eyes of Israel to the village in affection or in hope. The birth of Jesus, of course, has so distinguished the place to us, as to give each reference in the Old Testament to the city, whether in history, prophecy, or psalm, a tender significance. Micah clearly saw the "secret of the ages," when he exclaimed, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." (Mic. 5: 2; cf. Luke 2: 1-14.) Bethlehem was located some five or six miles south of Jerusalem; and after the events of our lesson for today, and those to follow, it became pre-eminently known as "the city of David."

It had been the duty of Samuel, during the period of his judgeship, to go from city to city to render judgment and punish offenders (see

1 Sam. 7: 15, 16), and it is easy to see from the history of Saul's reign that his influence was still widely felt. It is very likely that the elders of Bethlehem feared that their city, in some way, had failed to meet Jehovah's approval, and had thereby incurred the divine wrath. And, too, it appears that Samuel was accustomed to visit various localities, at uncertain intervals, for the purpose, not only of holding courts of justice and redressing grievances, but also of celebrating religious services, and offering sacrifices. Samuel, in addition to being a judge, was also a prophet and a priest.

The sanctification which Samuel authorized the elders of Bethlehem, along with Jesse and his sons to see to, consisted in cleansing themselves from any ceremonial defilements. (Cf. Gen. 35: 2; Ex. 19: 10.) No one can read the law of Moses without being deeply impressed with the place and significance of sanctification among the people of Israel; and the same thing is true in the New Testament. The New Testament meaning of the term, and that is what we are primarily interested in, is to set part unto the Lord's service; and that can be done only as one yields himself to the truth of the gospel. (See John 17: 17; Heb. 10: 10; Eph. 5: 26; 1: 13, 14.) The absolute necessity of sanctification, on the part of the child of God, can be seen by reading Hebrews 12: 14, namely, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord."

It is, of course, possible that Jesse was one of the elders of Bethlehem, or at least one of the principal men of the city; and if either of these possibilities was true, then Samuel could give him and his sons this special attention, without arousing the curiosity of the neighbors. But at any rate, Jesse and his sons were called to the sacrifice; and there is nothing in the text which indicates that there was anything singular about it, other than that the Lord had specified that they be there.

How God's Election Works

(1 Sam. 16: 6-12)

And it came to pass when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed

is before him. But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he.

The sons of Jesse, at the proper time, presented themselves before Samuel for his inspection; but it should be remembered that Samuel was depending upon the Lord for instruction, as to what he should do. (See verse 3.) It is possible that Samuel disclosed his principal purpose in coming to Bethlehem to those who were present; but, be that as it may, the work of selecting the new king was then under way. Saul had been chosen because of his great physical stature; and that may have come into the mind of Samuel as he looked upon Eliab, the first of Jesse's sons to pass before him. But the time had come in the economy of Jehovah, when mere physical fitness had ceased to be a standard for leadership in the kingdom. This, however, does not imply that physical fitness should be disregarded, in selecting a person for any given task; but it does indicate that such qualifications should not be regarded as one's chief asset. It would be a blessing if every person who engages in the Lord's service were in the best physical condition possible; but that is in no way essential to effective and acceptable work in his kingdom. (Cf. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.) We do not know why

Eliab was unacceptable to the Lord; but he was, for some reason, rejected.

After Jehovah told Samuel that he had rejected the first of Samuel's sons to come before him, he then gave the prophet the divine standard for judging; and it is one we cannot study and apply too carefully or too often. God's ways and man's ways, when left to himself, are never the same; for no man, in and of himself, can ever reach the standard which Jehovah maintains. "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.)

Man, of course, in the very nature of the case, can see only the outward appearance and manifestations, but Jehovah sees all of that and more; he looks into the innermost recesses of the heart and soul. "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4: 12, 13.)

W. M. Taylor, in commenting on the words of Jehovah to Samuel, notes that it makes little difference, therefore, what the outward appearance is; for if the heart is wrong, then nothing can be right. Christianity does not consist in attractive physical features, and bodily beauty is not holiness; and it is for these reasons that character should always be the chief object of one's attention. It is therefore not how one *looks*, but what he *is*, that counts before Jehovah; and if one will conform to the divine pattern which Jehovah gave to Samuel, his soul will become beautiful in the eyes of the Lord, and his life will be bright, even in the sight of his fellow men, with a glory which is not of this world.

If the matter of choosing a new king had been left to Samuel and Jesse, it is practically certain that

one of the seven sons of the latter, who passed before the prophet, would have been selected. But the work in question was the Lord's, and he reserved the right to make his own selection of the one to do it. Too few people, who profess to follow the Lord, are willing to permit his overruling providence to guide them in their service for him. We should, to be sure, do the best that we can, but we do not always know what is the best. Too often we allow worldly considerations, rather than God's glory and the good of ourselves and that of our fellow men, to determine the fields of our activity. Any man who does his best, while trusting in God for guidance, can look back over his life, and see many instances in which the Lord has led him into places for usefulness.

That which is said about David indicates that he was a fairly young man, but old enough to attend to the duties of caring for the sheep. His age probably caused his father to think that he was not old enough to be invited to such a meeting as Samuel had called. But young David was not the only such person who has been left out of such considerations. How often are the youngest in the family, or in a congregation of the Lord's people neglected, when important planning for needed work is before the family or church! The youngest, in the case now under consideration, proved, not only to be the most important, but the very one who could fill the place and accomplish the work which needed to be done. If the older people, and especially the leaders in the congregations, would only look, they could find many useful people among the younger ones about them.

David's training was ideal for the work which God had for him to do; and it is both interesting and profitable to observe the many references which he made in later years to his shepherd-life. (Cf., for example, Psalm 23.) Many of the outstanding men and women of the Bible were among the lowly toilers of the earth. (Consider for example Elisha, Amos, Ruth, Jesus, and Paul, to name only a few.) Some of the Lord's apostles were fishermen, and

Moses himself was a keeper of sheep. Such people not only knew the meaning of work; they also understood many of the problems which are common to the average man and woman, who make up such a large part of human society.

If David was disappointed in not getting to attend the sacrifice, that must have been forgotten, when his father called for him to come in. He was busy at work as a shepherd boy, when his call came; and when

he went to the sacrifice, he received the greatest blessing after all. The term "ruddy" means *red*, and it is generally thought that David had red, or perhaps golden hair, along with fair skin and rosy cheeks; all of which would mark him as being good to look upon, in contrast with those of dark hair and complexion, which probably was the general rule. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil, when they were chosen or inducted into office.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Contrast Saul and David as it respects the question of greatness.

In what way was David regarded by the people of his kingdom?

Why could so many things be attributed to him?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstance were the words of the golden text written?

In what way did Saul first try to get rid of David and why did he fail?

What was the king's next effort to accomplish his purpose?

Why is it always a good thing for a person to behave himself wisely?

A New Mission for Samuel

Under what circumstance did Samuel and Saul have their last meeting?

Why was it necessary that a new king be chosen?

What was Samuel's attitude toward the sinful Saul?

What question did the prophet ask Jehovah about going to Bethlehem and why?

What was the nature of the Lord's answer and what did it involve?

When is concealment of one's purpose proper and when is it not proper?

What are the actual facts regarding Samuel's visit to Bethlehem?

What information do we have concerning the identity of Jesse?

The Plan for Anointing Another King

What do we know of the little town of Bethlehem?

Why would the elders of the city fear the coming of Samuel?

In what way did the prophet tell the leading men of the city to get ready for the sacrifice?

What is the meaning and significance of sanctification so far as we are concerned?

Why can't people see the Lord without sanctification?

What circumstance cleared the way for Jesse and his sons to attend the sacrifice without attracting undue attentions from the townspeople?

How God's Election Works

In what way did the sons of Jesse present themselves before Samuel?

What happened when the first one stood before the prophet?

What standard for judging did Jehovah make known to Samuel?

Why was the physical aspect of the possible choices for king disregarded at this time?

What should be our attitude toward such matters?

Why can't the thoughts and ways of men equal the thoughts and ways of God?

In what way does man always appear in the presence of Jehovah?

What, then, really counts in the Lord's sight?

What lesson should we learn from Jesse's apparent neglect of David in not calling him to the sacrifice along with his brothers?

Lesson VI—May 11, 1969

DAVID AND GOLIATH

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 17: 19, 23, 24, 32, 41-52

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Is'-ra-el, were in the vale of E'-lah, fighting with the Phi-lis'-tines.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion,

the Phi-lis'-tine of Gath, Go-li'-ath by name, out of the ranks of the Phi-lis'-tines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.

24 And all the men of Is'-ra-el, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Phi-lis'-tine.

41 And the Phi-lis'-tine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42 And when the Phi-lis'-tine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance.

43 And the Phi-lis'-tine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Phi-lis'-tine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Phi-lis'-tine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said David to the Phi-lis'-tine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Je-ho'-vah of hosts, the God of the armies of Is'-ra-el, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will Je-ho'-vah deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Phi-lis'-tines this day unto the birds of the heavens, and to the wild beasts of the

earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Is'-ra-el,

47 And that all this assembly may know that Je-ho'-vah saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Je-ho'-vah's, and he will give you into our hand.

48 And it came to pass, when the Phi-lis'-tine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Phi-lis'-tine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Phi-lis'-tine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Phi-lis'-tine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Phi-lis'-tine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

51 Then David ran, and stood over the Phi-lis'-tine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Phi-lis'-tines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

52 And the men of Is'-ra-el and of Ju'-dah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Phi-lis'-tines, until thou comest to Ga'-i, and to the gates of Ek'-ron. And the wounded of the Phi-lis'-tines fell down by the way to Sha-a-ra'-im, even unto Gath, and unto Ek'-ron.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."*

(Phil. 4: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 17: 1-11.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 5. M..... The Giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 1-11)
- May 6. T..... David in the Camp of Israel (1 Sam. 17: 12-39)
- May 7. W. David's Great Faith (1 Sam. 17: 41-52)
- May 8. T..... A Prayer of David (P'salm 54: 1-7)
- May 9. F..... Divine Deliverance (Psalm 44: 1-8)
- May 10. S..... How Jesus Triumphed Over Satan (Matt. 4: 1-11)
- May 11. S..... Paul's Assurance (Heb. 13: 6)

TIME.—1063 B.C.

PLACE.—The Vale of Elah.

PERSONS.—Saul, David, and Goliath.

Introduction

Those who read the history of David thoughtfully will observe that he is introduced into history by three significant incidents. The first one, which we studied last week, was his anointing to be king of Is-

rael. Saul had been rejected by Jehovah, because of his disobedience, and Samuel was sent to Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse, to select a successor to the unfaithful man from Benjamin. Jesse was the father of

eight sons, and the seven older ones were at the sacrifice which Samuel made; and when they passed before the man of God, each one was rejected. After being asked if he had any other sons, Jesse replied by saying that the youngest was in the field with the sheep. Samuel asked that he be called, and young David proved to be the one whom God chose to rule over his people.

David's next appearance was as a maker of "medicinal music," in the presence of the troubled king of Israel. The inspired record says that "The Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." The servants of Saul suggested that a "skillful player on the harp" be sought out and brought to the king; "and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well." This idea appealed to the king; and upon being told that a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite was such a person, Saul sent to Jesse and obtained the services of David. "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." (1 Sam. 16: 14-23.) Although this narrative is in the same chapter, as that of the anointing of David

by Samuel, the two accounts are given as being somewhat independent of each other.

The third incident by which David was introduced into history was the one about which we are to study today. Notwithstanding the fact that David had been in the presence of Saul, as his musician and armorbearer, the account of his fight with Goliath plainly indicates that he was wholly unknown to the king. Consider the following two statements in the second and third accounts of David's introduction into history, namely, (1) "And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armorbearer." (1 Sam. 16: 21.) (2) "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, as thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is." (1 Sam. 17: 55, 56.) One would think that at least "the captain of the host" would know the young man, who had been the king's armorbearer. But as it is, the only conclusion we can draw is that David was introduced into history by three loosely-connected narratives; and it is important that we keep these facts in mind, as we study the record of his life.

The Golden Text

"I can do all things in him that strengthened me." Although David lived in the dispensation which preceded the present age, the principle contained in the words just quoted is applicable alike in the history of both periods. (Cf. 1 Sam. 14: 6; Judges 7: 4, 7; Zech. 4: 6.) Any one who reads the Bible knows that Jehovah has always supplied whatever was needed for the accomplishment of any task which he assigned to his people. That was true in the case of David, and it is just as true in our case today. When any child of God joins his earthly feebleness to the eternal power of God, he can truly say, I can do whatever God is pleased to have me accomplish. That evidently was the way Paul felt about the matter, when he wrote the words which serve as the golden

text for today's lesson. When one indeed and in truth links his life with the Lord's life, he puts himself in touch with unlimited power; and that means that he will have the necessary strength for the accomplishment of whatever the Lord wants done. (Cf. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10; Phil. 4: 19; Heb. 4: 14-16; 13: 5, 6.)

It sometimes helps one to a better understanding of a passage of scripture, to read different translations of it, and that is what we shall do here. *The New English Bible:* "I have strength for anything through him who gives me power." *Phillips:* "I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who lives within me." *The Twentieth Century New Testament:* "I can do everything in the strength of him who makes me strong!" *Living Letters:* "For I can do everything God asks me to with

the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power." That which is contained in the passage just quoted is what is sometimes called "Christian Omnipotence"; and in the words of John Allen Chalk, "Unlimited power in every area of this life awaits the Christian. Paul's statement in our text is the unrefuted claim of 1900 years of Christianity. It is a pity that Twentieth Century Christians surrounded by power, fail to see the dynamite available to them. This failure results in lost souls, ruined lives, and a weak, ineffective, unprogressive, unproductive church."

It is, of course, very evident, as may be seen by considering the facts in the case, that God gave David the power which he needed to meet the challenge which was before him. David realized this, as we shall see

further on in this study. When the child of God is aware of the source and the magnitude of the strength which is available to him, he does not have any need whatsoever to try to inject himself into the situation. Instead, he should always keep in mind the words of Jesus, namely, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16: 24.) The original word for "let him deny" himself is *apaneomai*, and it means, according to Greek scholars, to renounce, disregard, give up one's personality, and act in a wholly selfless manner. The root from which the original word just cited is derived means, according to Kittel, "to say no" which, in the case now under consideration, signifies to say no to one's self.

The Text Explained

The Occasion for the Contest

(1 Sam. 17: 19, 23, 24)

Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the vale of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. . . . And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard, them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

It will be well for those who are studying this lesson to read the entire seventeenth chapter of First Samuel; and if that is done, it will be much easier for them to grasp the situation out of which the lesson comes. The events which we are to consider at this time took place during the war between the children of Israel and the Philistines. It is thought that the Philistines came to Palestine from Caphtor, that is, Crete (Amos 9: 7; Jer. 47: 4), and settled along a narrow strip of the coastline in the southwestern part of the country. While it appears that they were one people, yet in their government it seems that they were divided into a confederacy of five, more or less, independent cities, namely, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. (See map.) If one will consult the Book of Judges,

he will find that the Philistines held the people of Israel in hard and cruel bondage, during the times of Shamgar and Samson; and it was only under Samuel that the people of Israel were able to break the power of these oppressors, to any great degree, although they did enjoy temporary relief under Shamgar and following the death of Samson.

It appears that Saul was quite successful in his fight against the Philistines, during the earlier part of his reign; and it is altogether possible that they were encouraged to renew their hostilities against Israel, when they heard of Samuel's separation from Saul. At any rate, there was war between Israel and the Philistines at the time of our lesson for today. "Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle; and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammin. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and encamped in the vale of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them." (1 Sam. 17: 1-3.)

The Philistines had a soldier in their camp, whose name was Goliath. He is referred to as a champion; and when we consider his size, it is easy for us to imagine that he was just that. His height is given as six cubits and a span, which is, according to our measurements, nine feet and nine inches tall, since a cubit was eighteen inches and a span was equalled to nine inches; and he was clothed and armed in keeping with his size. This giant came out in view, and in hearing distance, of the Israelites morning and evening for a period of forty days, and challenged their army to furnish a man to fight with him. He proposed that the victor in the contest should have as his reward the servitude of the losing country to his people. As the Philistine giant continued his challenge, he said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. And when Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid."

David's three oldest brothers were in the army with Saul, and their father was at that time an old man, and stricken in years among men. David himself was dividing his time between Saul and his home in Bethlehem, so that he could feed his father's sheep. And in the course of time, Jesse said to David, "Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to thy brethren; and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge." (1 Sam. 17: 17, 18.) David promptly obeyed his father, and was soon at the camp of the armies of Israel. It appears that both of the opposing forces were about to begin a battle, as David arrived; and he "left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army, and came and saluted his brethren." (Verses 19-22.)

As David was talking with his brothers, the Philistine champion came out of the ranks of the Philistines, and issued his daily challenge, which he had been hurling at them for more than a month. David heard that which Goliath had to say, and he also observed that when the

giant spoke, the men of Israel fled from him, and were afraid. It was then that the men of Israel said, "Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man that killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." (1 Sam. 17: 25.)

It appears from verses 26, 27 that David wanted to make sure that he correctly understood that which had been said by the men of Israel, regarding the man who would take away the reproach from Israel, because of Goliath's challenge; and added, "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" This conversation between David and the men who spoke with him was overheard by his oldest brother Eliab. It appears that Eliab was both angry and disgusted with his youngest brother's presence and attitude, and he said, "Why art thou come down? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." (1 Sam. 17: 28.)

Goliath's Challenge Accepted by David

(1 Sam. 17: 32)

A man of lesser stature than David's probably would have become angry at his brother's sarcastic remarks, but David maintained his self-control, and gave further evidence that he was the kind of man who was needed there among the men of Israel. This is an important lesson for us. If some one mistreats us by saying improper things to or about us, the situation will not be improved by our becoming angry, and seeking to retaliate in kind. We will be much better off, if we will follow Paul's instruction, and endeavor to overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12: 17-21; cf. Prov. 15: 1; 16: 32.) David's reply to his brother was both respectful and to the point: "And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" There was indeed a cause, both for David's being there (his father had sent him), and for his attitude toward the challenge of the

Philistine giant, since not one of the soldiers of Israel was willing to do anything about it. And before criticizing some one else for speaking or acting, it might be well to ask, *Is there not a cause?*

And so David turned away from his angry brother, and spoke to some one else, with the result that the people answered him again after the former manner. And when the word about David's remarks reached Saul, the latter sent for the young man. *"And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."* Saul's astonishment must have been as great as David's courage, when he reminded the latter that he was not able to go up against such a giant. *"And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."*

But David told Saul how he had been successful in slaying both a lion and a bear, when they attempted to carry away some lambs from his flock; and he assured the king that Jehovah, who delivered him out of the paw of the lion and of the bear, would also deliver him from the man who was defying the armies of the living God. After Saul saw that David was determined to go up against the challenger of his armies, he attempted to arm him for the fight; but David would not accept anything which the king offered him. Instead, he took only his staff in his hand, and his sling. And as he prepared to go forth to meet the giant, he "chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, . . . and he drew near to the Philistine."

The Encounter and the Result

(1 Sam. 17: 41-52)

And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bear the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by

his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day unto the birds of the heavens, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that Jehovah saveth not with the sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hand. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

The contrast between the two warriors now before us was most impressive. The giant had every military preparation, while David's trust was in Jehovah, which was a living demonstration of the meaning of our golden text for today's lesson. The whole situation, no doubt, was designed to bring the future king of Israel before the people. It appears that when two champions met in such a combat as this, that each made a statement to the other before the fight began. It is very probable that Goliath did not see David's sling, but only his staff; and that may account for the reference to the dog and the staves, as if to say, Do you consider me a mere dog after your sheep, and do you think that all you need is a staff to chase me away? The giant then called on his gods to bring David into contempt, for the insult which he had offered him; and then added his own boast of that which he proposed to do to David.

There is a marked contrast between the statement which Goliath

made, and the one which David submitted. The latter's entire trust was in Jehovah, and that which he proposed to do was for his glory. He wanted all the world to know that the battle was the Lord's, and that it would result in every one's knowing that the Almighty was directing it. This is the way the Lord's people should feel about his work now. When they are willing to put their trust in God, and use the wisdom and strength which he supplies to overcome all obstacles which may be in the way; then the world about them will be impressed with the fact that he is indeed leading his people to the victory which is for their good and his glory. (Cf. Rom. 8: 31-39; 1 Cor. 15: 57, 58; 1 John 5: 4.)

The only part of Goliath's body which was not covered by his armor was apparently his forehead, and that was the target of David's aim. The young man from Bethlehem was evidently an expert with the sling; but the success of his effort was probably due more to the providence of God, than to David's marksmanship. The stone which David slang made a direct hit, and that marked the end of the boastful man from Gath of the Philistines. It is, of course, possible that David was capable of such dexterous marksmanship; for we read of such capabilities among the people of Benjamin: "And the children of Benjamin were numbered on that day out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who were numbered seven hundred chosen men. Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at a hair-breadth, and not miss." (Judges 10: 15, 16.) If Goliath knew of that ability among the people of Israel, he probably didn't think about it when young David came out to meet him. But whatever may have been the facts in the case, David gave all the glory to God for his remarkable triumph.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew

him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou comest to Gai, and to the gates of Ekron.

It is probable, from the wording of the text which has just been quoted, that the giant who faced David was not completely killed by the stone, when it first struck his forehead; but he very likely would have died from that blow, even if David had not done anything more to him. But when the entire text is considered in detail, it appears that David finished the work which was begun with the stone, by using Goliath's own sword. His head was severed from his body, and it was later taken by David to Jerusalem, evidently as a kind of trophy. (See verse 54.)

When Goliath issued his challenge to the armies of Israel, he specified that the people on the losing side would become servants of those whose fighter was successful in killing the other one; but when things turned out as they did, the Philistines were not willing to fulfil that condition. Instead, as Adam Clarke notes, they precipitately left the field of battle; and the armies of Israel, taking appropriate advantage of the situation, completely routed their enemies.

This lesson is a powerful example of that which faith in God can accomplish. As long as the people of Israel relied on their own ability, they were both humiliated and unable to win a victory over their enemies. The same principle is just as true today; for the New Testament 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.) When people learn to put their trust in the Lord, it will surprise them what the providence of God can accomplish.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

In what way is David introduced into the history of the Bible?

Ask members of the class to discuss each of the recorded incidents.
 What lesson do we learn from these accounts regarding the text of the Bible itself?

The Golden Text

Why are the words of this New Testament passage suitable as a golden text for this lesson?
 What important principle do they set forth?
 Why is the principle of the golden text such an important lesson for us?
 What is the value of different translations of a given passage of scripture?
 Why does the faithful child of God often need power beyond that of his own?
 Can God supply that power today without a miracle? Give reasons for your answer.
 What kind of an attitude should every Christian always manifest?

The Occasion for the Contest

Why is it important to read the entire context of this lesson?
 How did the Philistines come to be living in Palestine and where did they come from?
 What is known of the relationship between the people of Israel and the Philistines?
 What had been Saul's relationship with those people?
 Why was Israel unable to triumph over the Philistines at the time of this lesson?
 What was one of the chief causes of their fear and consternation?
 How did David happen to be at the battle field and what attitude did he manifest?
 What was his brother's attitude toward

him and how did he handle that situation?

Goliath's Challenge Accepted by David

What lesson should we learn from David's conduct toward his brother?
 What is the very best way to deal with wrongs which have been done to us?
 What can you say regarding the appropriateness of David's reply to his brother?
 How did Saul feel about David's desire to go out against Goliath and what did the king do?
 How did David respond to Saul's advice regarding the proposed fight with the giant?
 In what way did David equip himself for the contest?
 What were the principal differences between David and Goliath?

The Encounter and the Result

What must have been the impression the two armies had of David and Goliath as they approached each other for the battle?
 What kind of a statement did the giant make and what apparently prompted it?
 In what way did David express himself about the situation?
 In what manner did David give evidence of his faith on that occasion?
 How do we know that such an attitude on the part of his children is pleasing to God today?
 In what way did David make his attack on the Philistine giant?
 Why was David able to demonstrate such marksmanship with a sling?
 How did David bring a complete end to the boastful Goliath?
 What is the principal value of this lesson to us today?

Lesson VII—May 18, 1969

SAUL'S ANGER TOWARD DAVID

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 18: 5-16

5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Phi-lis'-tine, that the women came out of all the cities of Is'-ra-el, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music.

7 And the women sang one to another as they played, and said,
 Saul hath slain his thousands,
 And David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David

ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as he did day by day. And Saul had his spear in his hand;

11 And Saul cast the spear; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because Je-ho'-vah was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him

from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Je-ho'-vah was with him.

15 And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him.

16 But all Is'-ra-el and Ju'-dah loved David; for he went out and came in before them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And Saul was David’s enemy continually.”* (1 Sam. 18: 29.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 18: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 12. M.....David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18: 1-9)
- May 13. T.....Saul Attempted to Kill David (1 Sam. 18: 5-16)
- May 14. W.....Jonathan Warns David (1 Sam. 19: 1-7)
- May 15. T.....Jonathan Loved David (1 Sam. 20: 12-23)
- May 16. F.....Michal and David (1 Sam. 18: 17-21)
- May 17. S.....Michal Helps David (1 Sam. 19: 8-17)
- May 18. S.....A Psalm of Prayer (Psalm 64: 1-10)

TIME.—1063 B.C.

PLACE.—Gibeath of Saul.

PERSONS.—Saul, David, and others.

Introduction

The lesson which we are to study today has to do with one of the common sins of the human race, namely, that of hatred when there is no legitimate basis for it. And we may be certain that such a condition does not manifest itself as full-grown, when it first appears, generally speaking. That condition was not true of Saul; and we may be certain that it is not true today with the average people. Hatred, ordinarily, is the result of a gradual growth; and that growth usually begins with an envious or jealous attitude. That was true in the case of Saul; and inasmuch as human nature is substantially the same today, we may expect the same conditions to prevail now. It is well, of course, to consider the facts as they are related to Saul, but it is also important that we deal with the situation, as it respects us. This is one of the prime purposes for which the Old Testament Scriptures have been preserved. (Cf. Rom. 15: 4.)

There are some things, of course, which the children of God should hate (Psalm 139: 21, 22; 97: 10; Prov. 8; 13; Amos 5: 15; Rev. 2: 6); but that is not the kind of hatred with which we are dealing today. The apostle John says, “Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that lov-

eth 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: 13-15.) This statement by John is closely akin to one which was made by Jesus in his sermon on the mount, namely, “Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one that is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.” (Matt. 5: 21, 22.)

Hatred, if allowed to remain in one’s heart, is murder, because it is the seed from which murder grows; and, to use an expression which is found in the Book of James, hatred, when it has conceived, bears animosity; and animosity, when it is full-grown, brings forth murder. The wisdom of the ancients notes that “as he [a man] thinketh within himself, so is he” (Prov. 23: 7), and the dictionary definition of “hatred” is “strong aversion or detestation coupled with ill will”; and if such a condition is permitted to continue in the heart of an individual, it is not difficult to envision the ultimate outcome. Williams translates 1

John 3: 15 in these words: "Anyone who keeps on hating his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer can have eternal life remaining in him." Charles Simmons has observed that "malice can al-

ways find a mark to shoot at, and a pretence to fire." The only way to overcome hatred is by love; or, which is the same thing, by following the teaching and example of Jesus.

The Golden Text

"And Saul was David's enemy continually." If one will read the immediate context concerning the relationship of Saul and David, during the time which is covered by the lesson text for today, it will be easy for him to see that the history contained therein, in reality belonged to David. The star of David was rapidly rising against the dark background of the declining king. Saul had no legitimate reason for becoming the enemy of the young man from Bethlehem; but, as the record plainly states, another spirit had entered into the heart of the rebellious king. The editor of *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible* points out that there are many ways of describing how such a passion, as that which characterized Saul, could take possession of one's soul, and cause him to hate one whom he had once loved. It apparently at first becomes somewhat baffled, as it notes the unfolding of events which are taking place before it, with the result that the feeling of the oscillation of affection and suspicion takes hold of him; and before he realizes what is happening, he finds himself under the influence of an ungoverned and ungovernable frenzy, which prompts the most extravagant and veracious deeds. The Bible name for all of this is stated in these words: "Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." (1 Sam. 16: 14.)

The passage just quoted indicates the inner change which took place in Saul, and whatever evil was

manifested in his life came about as the result of the change, rather than from the circumstances about him. As long as Saul was governed by the Spirit of God, his life was pleasing to his Maker; but when an evil spirit began to dominate his life, the situation was completely changed. The spirit of the evil one is never interested in true friendship, but seeks to alienate those in whom he dwells from everything which they formerly took delight in. Saul's regard for David was at first gratifying; but when he began to be influenced by the evil one, that affection was turned into hatred, with the result that Saul became David's enemy.

Although David, from the worldly point of view, had a right to resent and resist the onslaughts of Saul, it is refreshing to note that he behaved himself wisely; and it is a noticeable fact that David maintained that attitude toward Saul as long as the latter lived. The apostle Paul says, "Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12: 17-21.) This is the Lord's will for us today.

The Text Explained

David's Place in the Kingdom of Saul

(1 Sam. 18: 5)

And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people,

and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

The events of this lesson apparently took place soon after David's victory over the Philistine giant Goliath. It was natural for the people of Israel, including the king himself, to feel grateful to the young shep-

herd from Bethlehem. He not only had brought to an end the humiliation which they were suffering, because of the daily challenge of Goliath; but he was also directly instrumental, under Jehovah, in liberating the people of Israel from the subjugation of the Philistines. "And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." (1 Sam. 17: 57, 58.)

The lesson now before us is a good example of the manner in which the various ones who came in contact with David reacted toward him. The verses which immediately precede the lesson text tell of the beginning of the friendship between Jonathan, Saul's son, and David: "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." (1 Sam. 18: 1-4.)

It also appears that the king himself had great regard for the young hero, and evidently sent him on a number of missions; for the text says, "And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely." This means, of course, that Saul could trust David, and the latter gave the king every right to feel that way about him. This attitude on the part of David leads one to think of a statement in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, namely, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." (Prov. 22: 29.) The appointment of David "over the men of war" was the beginning of his distinguished career as a military commander.

The Occasion of Saul's Anger toward David

(1 Sam. 18: 6-9)

And it came to pass as they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women sang one to another as they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

The situation described in the portion of the text just quoted apparently marked the beginning of Saul's unfavorable attitude toward David. The heart of Saul, following the departure of the Lord from him, was a fertile field for envy and jealousy; and when once the seed of those vices were sown there, nothing could stop their growth. Jehovah had already rejected Saul from being king, and the days of his reign in that capacity were numbered. If Saul had had the right attitude toward the Lord, he would have turned away from his evil ways, and would have made an effort to serve him with all his heart; but as it was, as already noted, "the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." David had already been anointed as Jehovah's choice to succeed Saul as the ruler of his people; and it may have been that the song of the women was providentially designed to pave the way for the change in the kingdom from Saul to David. It was pointed out in last week's lesson that David was rapidly coming both into public view and public favor with the people of Israel.

The editor of *The Speaker's Bible*, under the title of *The Psychology of Hate*, based on 1 John 3: 15, asks, Who does not know something of the growth of personal hostility? And he then goes on to answer according to the following: The psy-

chology of hate often takes the most puerile form. Some one does us a wrong, frequently of a very slight nature, sometimes entirely imaginary, and that starts us on the way to coloring all our judgments of that person. If perchance some one disagrees with some of our ideas, we are ready to picture his whole mentality as bordering upon imbecility; and if some one differs from us on a point of policy, we are ready to think that he is making every possible effort to thwart our plans.

And before we realize what we are doing, we begin to dwell upon the idea that the people just referred to actually hate us; and with that kind of an attitude in mind, it is only a short step before we ourselves begin to indulge in a hatred for them, which both slanders their characters and impugns their motives. And with this kind of a feeling toward them, we cannot think of them without a hot feeling coming over us; and if we are not careful, we are likely to find ourselves wishing them ill, perhaps contemplating with satisfaction the fact that they cannot live for ever, and maybe even wishing that they were actually dead. And thus, the steps which lead people with more active natures than ours right on to murder itself, are actually being taken by ourselves.

It is plain from the lesson text now under consideration that David himself did not do one thing to bring on or excite the wrath of the unfortunate king. The well-meaning acts of innocent people were made to focus their light upon the young hero, with the result that he was pictured in the mind of Saul his active rival for the throne. It is true that David had been selected to be the next ruler of God's people, but there is not the slightest degree of evidence that he was doing anything to undermine the person and position of Saul. This kind of a situation has been enacted over and over again. There are individuals whom others regard as their enemies, and for whom they have only hatred, individuals who never thought of such a feeling toward them. They have simply been going on, and doing their duty; but the diseased minds of the would-be opponents, upon hearing others speak

well of the objects of their dislike, have come to the conclusion that they are in reality their enemies. When the historian says that "Saul eyed David from that day and forward," he means that the king watched enviously or jealously; or, which is the same thing, looked askance at his young aide.

Saul's Efforts to Kill David

(1 Sam. 18: 10-16)

And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as he did day by day. And Saul had his spear in his hand; and Saul cast the spear; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall. And David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because Jehovah was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them.

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary thinks that the evil spirit from Jehovah was apparently a gloomy, suspicious melancholy, bordering on madness, which affected the mind of Saul. Such passages as Amos 3: 6 seem to indicate that the Hebrew people considered any visitation, either good or bad, came from Jehovah. Adam Clarke, in commenting on 1 Samuel 16: 14, says, "The evil spirit was either immediately sent from the Lord, or permitted to come. Whether this was a diabolic possession, or a mere mental malady, the learned are not agreed; it seems to have partaken of both. That Saul had fallen into a deep melancholy, there is little doubt; that the devil might work more effectually on such a state of mind, there can be but little question. There is an old proverb, Satan delights to fish in troubled waters; and Saul's situation of mind gave him many advantages."

At any rate, one development after another occurred to excite Saul's jealousy afresh; until at last the turbulent ferment of passion broke forth into a wild frenzy. So far as the king was concerned, the young armorbearer (1 Sam. 16: 21) whom he had promoted to be head over his forces, was not satisfied to cast into the shade Saul's name and martial glory—his aim was higher than that—he was bent on becoming king. His plan for accomplishing that end, as Saul saw it, was very simply, namely, he would become the bosom friend of the king's son, marry the king's daughter; and then at the opportune time, he would succeed to the throne before the death of the present occupant. With all of this in mind, the decision of Saul was immovable: the traitor must die; and the king lost no time in trying to bring that event to pass as soon as possible.

David, as the historian informs us, escaped the king's wrath twice; but that did not end Saul's efforts to kill him. "With the tenacity peculiar to one haunted by an illusion, he devoted himself hence forth almost exclusively to his purpose of avenging himself on his supposed mortal enemy and persecutor. We may confidently assert that this thought, which never left the unfortunate man, finally wasted him away. Stormy and dark as Saul's nature had become, and grave as had been his failure to be worthy of the monarchy, one cannot but feel the infinite pathos and pity of his life."

Saul was now mad with suspicion and jealousy and hatred. His was a continuous life of murder; for he lived in hatred of David, and hunted for him, as he would for a wild beast, so that he might take his life away from him. Saul had indulged in hateful passions, until they had completely mastered him, and were plunging him headlong into eternal ruin. And yet, in the midst of that terrible darkness and madness and moral derangement, there were brief times when he appeared to be conscious of the sunny beams of light, which indicated that, beneath all these strange and awful distortions of his mind, there was a nobler and truer self, which was not entirely dead. But the sad part was his inability to remain in the con-

finer of that truer self. However, like a dismantled and helpless wreck, over which wild and pitiless storms rage, this unfortunate king showed, even in his ruin, what he might and ought to have been.

In his book, *Memoir of Susan Ferrier*, J. A. Doyle says, "Suspicion is a monster 'tis vain to contend with; it can swallow everything or it can live upon nothing; its patience is as inexhaustible as its ingenuity is wonderful, and it builds castles out of rubbish, and as often as they fall for want of a foundation it collects fresh materials and begins anew. The provoking thing is, it's always to be seen but never to be caught, so that there's no hopes of ever being able to overcome it."

Saul dismissed David from his court, and threw him into open dangers; but it seems that every effort which the king made to harm or destroy the young man who tried to be faithful to him, tended only to increase the latter's popularity with the people. "And Saul was afraid of David, because Jehovah was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them."

To sum up some of the things which have been said about hatred from the evil point of view, the editor of *The Speaker's Bible* notes that the peril of unreasoning hatred is greater for the hater, than it is for the hated. It is true that great injury may be, and often is, done to the victim, as George Eliot points out, when she says, "Hatred is like fire—it makes even light rubbish deadly;" but the moral injury which the hating man does to himself, is a far more terrible thing. Hatred is contrary to the rational nature of man, and blinds him to his own true good: hatred works like a disease or a cancerous growth in the soul of those who feel it. Hate therefore is a bad spirit with which to face the world; and it is, in the words of Augustus Thomas, heavier

freight for the skipper, than it is for the consignee.

Hating makes a man lose his perspective; for there is a terrible attraction about the thing or the person one fiercely hates. Love, as every one knows, is a tremendous attracting force; but so is hatred. One cannot keep away from that which he hates; for there is a power which perpetually draws him back to it. His thoughts dwell upon it, until it assumes proportions out of all keeping with its importance, with the result that the sense of his perspective has gone.

One of the greatest illustrations of the manner in which that which has just been said works, is that of Haman, in the *Book of Esther*. He had reached a height in the Persian Empire, in which he stood next to the king himself. But when his pride was wounded by Mordecai the Jew, because the latter refused to bow before him and do him rever-

ence, his reason was so affected by hatred that it could no longer function for him. He could easily have crushed Mordecai, "but he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone;" but resolved to destroy every Jew in the kingdom. This would make the whole race "atone" for the act of a single individual. But even at that, it was only when Haman came out of the palace and saw Mordecai, that his wrath burned within him. However, as he continued to see the Jew, his bitter feeling grew stronger in his heart, until at length, it was with him all the time. Mordecai, sat on him like the old man of the sea, and try as he might, he could not free himself from him. Haman's hatred for the Jew was like a mote in his eye; it mattered not which way he looked, the mote was still there; and so far as Haman was concerned, Mordecai, had completely blotted out the sun from the heavens to him.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Why is this such an important lesson for us?

What is the meaning of the term "hatred" and how is it related to us?

What are some of the things which Christians should, and should not, hate?

Why is the man who hates his brother a murderer?

How only can hatred be overcome?

The Golden Text

Discuss the context in which the words of the golden text are found.

How did Saul come to be such a "hater" of David?

How did David react to the hatred of Saul?

What is the lesson which we should learn from all of this?

David's Place in the Kingdom of Saul

When did the events of this lesson take place?

Discuss the different ways in which various people reacted toward David.

What was the attitude of Jonathan toward the young hero?

How did Saul apparently feel toward David at first?

What does the Bible say about the manner in which David conducted himself?

What promotion did David receive about this time?

The Occasion of Saul's Anger toward David

Discuss the situation which apparently marked the beginning of Saul's changed attitude.

Why was the king susceptible to such a reaction as that which characterized him?

What kind of an environment is essential for the growth of envy and jealousy?

What providential action may have been present when the women sang their songs?

What can you say regarding the psychology of hate?

Why did the victims of such an attitude feel as they do toward those about them?

Why do innocent people have to suffer under such circumstances?

What does the Bible mean by saying that Saul "eyed" David from that day and forward?

Saul's Efforts to Kill David

What apparently was the evil spirit which afflicted Saul?

In what sense did such a spirit come from Jehovah?

What was it that continued to "feed" the envy and jealousy of Saul?

In what way did David appear in his sight?

What effect did all of this have on the king?

What progress did the evil spirit make in the life of Saul?

What resolution did he eventually make with reference to David?

Why, then, was the life of Saul one of continuous murder?

In what way does suspicion work in the life of its victim?

Give a summary of the peril of unreasoning hatred.

How does the account of Haman illustrate the workings of hate?

Lesson VIII—May 25, 1969 DAVID AND JONATHAN

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 19: 1-7; 20: 12-17

1 And Saul spake to Jon'-a-than his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jon'-a-than, Saul's son, delighted much in David.

2 And Jon'-a-than told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself:

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and if I see aught, I will tell thee.

4 And Jon'-a-than spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good:

5 For he put his life in his hand, and smote the Phi-lis'-tine, and Je-ho'-vah wrought a great victory for all Is'-ra-el: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jon'-a-than: and Saul sware, As Je-ho'-vah liveth, he shall not be put to death.

7 And Jon'-a-than called David, and Jon'-a-than showed him all those

things. And Jon'-a-than brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as beforetime.

12 And Jon'-a-than said unto David, Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el, be *witness*: when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, or the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee?

13 Je-ho'-vah do so to Jon'-a-than, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and Je-ho'-vah be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the loving-kindness of Je-ho'-vah, that I die not;

15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no, not when Je-ho'-vah hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jon'-a-than made a covenant with the house of David, *saying*, And Je-ho'-vah will require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jon'-a-than caused David to swear again, for the love that he had to him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."* (Prov. 18: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 20: 30-42.

Daily Bible Readings

- May 19. M.....Love of Jonathan for David (1 Sam. 18: 1-5)
- May 20. T.....The Faith of Jonathan (1 Sam. 14: 6-15)
- May 21. W.....Enduring Love (1 Sam. 20: 12-23)
- May 22. T.....Abiding Friendship (1 Sam. 20: 35-42)
- May 23. F.....Divine Test of Friendship (John 15: 9-17)
- May 24. S.....Value of Friends (Prov. 18: 19-24)
- May 25. S.....Supremacy of Love (1 Cor. 13: 1-13)

TIME.—1063 B.C.

PLACE.—Gibeah of Saul.

PERSONS.—Saul, Jonathan, and David.

Introduction

The story of the friendship between Jonathan and David is one of the most beautiful narratives in all the literature of the Bible; and if

we should consider it from the purely human standpoint, it has a place beside such great love stories as that of Damon and Pythias. The friendship of Jonathan was truly noble, and there is not a selfish element to be found anywhere in it. Jonathan appears to have been considerably older than David; but the difference in years apparently made no difference in their devotion to each other. It appears practically certain that Jonathan knew that David would succeed his father as king; but he was a man of sterling character, and there was absolutely nothing, not even the ambition to be king, which could make him close his eyes to true worth and merit wherever he found it.

The elements of true friendship are always the same; and some of the noblest friendships which history records, were among people of lowly stations in life. This, of course, should be encouraging to many of us; for that is where the majority of us are found. It is encouraging therefore to find the noble principles of friendship directing the lives of people like ourselves; and it calls out the best that it is in us, when we observe our fellow men responding so nobly to the great principles of truth, righteousness, and devotion to each other. But this principle of friendship is not limited to any class of human beings, or to those of the same class, as may be seen in the case of Jonathan and David. The former was the son of a king, while the latter, in his own words, was a poor man. (1 Sam. 18: 23.)

As one reads the inspired record of the friendship between Jonathan and David, he will be impressed with the fact that it was first sought

by the king's son, who was also the older. "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." (1 Sam. 18: 1-4.)

The sealing of this covenant of friendship between Jonathan and David took place just after Saul's interview with David, following his victory over Goliath, and its significance is apparent, when one considers the contrast between a seasoned soldier like Jonathan, and an untrained (for military duty) shepherd boy like David. The latter, indeed, had gained prestige, when he met the challenge of the boastful Philistine; and it appears to have been Jonathan, more than any one else, who recognized that the courage in David's heart was superior to that of any military man in Israel, including himself. We are not surprised therefore to observe that the noble spirit of the king's son responded so powerfully to the call of the splendid traits, which were found in David's character. And it was Jonathan who paid his young friend the highest compliment which one soldier can pay another, when he gave him his uniform, his sword, his bow, and his girdle. This was Jonathan's way of saying that David was a braver and more heroic warrior, than he himself was.

The Golden Text

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." The context from which the words just quoted are taken reads as follows: "He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction; but there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Friendship has a powerful effect on the lives of those who give themselves to it; and it is for that reason that a person who makes many friends, does so to his own destruction. Unless friendship

is truly reciprocal, the one who gives himself to making many friends, will learn to his own sorrow that many people, whom he thought were his friends, only pretended to be so, in order to take advantage of him. That is the reason why any one who tries to make friends, should give careful consideration to the quality of friendship, rather than to its quality.

When the average person reads the passage which serves as our

golden text for today's lesson, he almost immediately thinks that the friend who sticks closer than a brother, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is true, of course, that he is such a friend to all who will truly seek his friendship; but that apparently is not the thought which the writer of the passage now under consideration had in mind. The point which that writer made, is similar to the idea which Jesus expressed, when he spoke the parable of the pearl of great price. (Matt. 13: 45, 46.) While this merchant was seeking goodly pearls, he came upon one of great price; and he went and sold all that he had, and bought that pearl. That pearl was far greater than the average run of such treasures. And so, in the case of friendship, it sometimes happens that the seeker after that relationship among the peoples of the earth, will come upon a friendship which is closer

than that of his own brother. That was the kind of friendship which existed between Jonathan and David.

There is, of course, no violence done to the Scriptures, when one takes the passage now under consideration, and applies it to the friendship of the Lord Jesus Christ; for there is no earthly friend, however great, who is as true to the faithful child of God, as is Jesus. The love of brethren here among men is usually regarded as being one of the most powerful and abiding relations here upon the earth; but even that, in its greatest degree, cannot compare with the love which the Lord manifests toward his people. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15: 13); but Jesus went further than that: he laid down his life for his enemies. (Rom. 5: 6-8.)

The Text Explained

Jonathan Intercedes for David

(1 Sam. 19: 1-7)

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. And Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself; and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and if I see aught, I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to theeward very good: for he put his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought great victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all these

things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as beforetime.

It is always a good thing if those who are studying the lessons which are contained in this series will read the intervening chapters and verses. This is true, not only for the purpose of getting all the information which the inspired historian has left on record, but also to be able to weave together all the related facts which have been set down for us. All that which has been recorded regarding a single major person or event, is not always found in one place, and that is particularly true of the persons and events we are now considering.

In the paragraphs between the first part of the lesson text for today, and the closing part of the text for last week's lesson, we have the account of Saul's effort to have David become his son-in-law, but that desire was not genuine on the part of the king. He hoped that the Philistines would kill David, and it was for that reason that he sent him out to fight with them. But when the time came for Saul to give his elder daughter to David, she was given to another. However, when the king's younger daughter's love

for David became known to Saul, he was pleased. "And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law a second time." (1 Sam. 18: 21.)

But the insincerity of Saul was again manifested toward David. When the latter hesitated about agreeing to become the king's son-in-law, on the ground that he was a poor man, and lightly esteemed, the king sent word to David, saying, "The king desireth not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines." But when David heard that all the dowry the king desired were the hundred foreskins of the Philistines, he promptly accepted the challenge, took his men with him, and in a short time he was able to deliver to the king, not the hundred foreskins which he had requested, but double that number. "And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw that Jehovah was with David; and Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul was David's enemy continually." (1 Sam. 18: 22-29.)

David, all the while, was conducting himself in a worthy manner, "so that his name was much set by." The people of Israel, generally speaking, had a very high regard for David, and he had the love of two of Saul's children—Jonathan and Michal, who had become his wife. These two children apparently understood the moral, spiritual, and mental condition of their father; and although they were his offspring, they were not to be denied the right to bestow their affection upon a young man who had demonstrated his worthiness. It has already been pointed out that the love which Jonathan had for David apparently had its beginning about the time that David defeated the Philistine giant Goliath, and any one who is acquainted with the facts in the case, will readily admit that his love for the young hero was based upon something more than mere sentiment; for the record says that he loved him as his own soul.

The love which Jonathan had for David required that the former make a choice between his father and the young man who was emerging in Israel as one of that nation's most illustrious leaders. There is no reason to doubt that Jonathan loved his father, but there was a principle involved in Jonathan's life which made it necessary for him to recognize and become attached to true worth, wherever he found it. Jesus gave emphasis to the truth suggested here, when he said, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14: 26.)

The original word for "hate," in the passage just quoted, is *miseō*; and it has been described as being a stronger word than the one used in Matthew 10: 37 (*phileō*), where the obvious meaning is to love less. Thus, the term "hate," in Luke 14: 26, means more than merely to love less. It carries with it the active opposition against any one, father, mother, wife, children, brother, sister, or even one's own self, whose way is contrary to the way of Christ. No one can please the Lord who endeavors to justify, or even condone, any person, however, close to him he may be, in any practice or attitude which is in opposition to that which the Lord's teaches.

Jonathan did not have the benefit of the fuller light of the truth which Jesus came to reveal, but it is obvious that he did understand, at least in part, the principle which Jesus later made plain to the people of his day, and, of course, to the people throughout the entire Christian dispensation. Jonathan knew that David was right, and he intended to stand with him, even though that meant that he would have to take a stand against his own father. Jonathan, as the text plainly declares, tried to reason with his father, and it appears that he had succeeded in getting Saul to change his attitude toward David; but, as later events make clear, his success in that respect was only temporary. But that did not deter Jonathan; for, as one can see from reading the record, he continued his friendship with David, and made every effort

to keep him from Saul's wrath, as long as he and his father lived.

David Is Reassured by Jonathan

(1 Sam. 20: 12, 13)

And Jonathan said unto David, Jehovah, the God of Israel, be witness: when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, or the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee? Jehovah do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and Jehovah be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

Saul's promise to Jonathan that the life of David would be spared was short lived. It was not long before the evil spirit again took hold of the king, and he tried again to kill David with his spear. David was playing his instrument for Saul, when the king aimed the spear at him, but he was able to escape it before it went into the wall. David then fled and went to his home, where his wife Michal aided him in escaping the further wrath of the king. David next went to Samuel; and every effort which Saul made to capture David there was resisted by the Spirit of God, which turned the three groups of messengers, who were sent to take David, and Saul himself, into prophets. (1 Sam. 19: 8-24.) David then came back to Jonathan, where the latter again reassured his friend, and where the two walked out into the field to talk and to plan their strategy. (1 Sam. 20: 1-11.)

The editor of *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, in commenting on Jonathan's role in this great drama of friendship, notes that he maintained his part of the friendship in the face of personal dangers; and it is worthy of careful consideration that he was able to remain loyal to David, without being disloyal to his father. After the evil spirit returned to Saul, and David was again forced to flee. It was in this flight that the two friends met again in secret interview, and made a second covenant, which was more binding than the first one had been. It was in the interview just referred to that the

character of Jonathan appears in its loveliest colors—his little artifices, his love for both his father and his friend, his bitter disappointment in his father's uncontrollable fury, his familiar sport of archery.

After the interview just referred to, Jonathan and David, with passionate embraces and tears, parted; and it was to be their lot that they would meet in life only one more time, in the forest of Ziph, during Saul's pursuit of David. Jonathan's alarm for David's safety had by this time changed into confidence that he would ultimately escape; and he "strengthened his hand in God." Finally, and for the third time, they renewed the covenant, and then parted for ever. (1 Sam. 23: 15-18.)

The Covenant between Jonathan and David Expanded and Confirmed with an Oath

(1 Sam. 20: 14-17)

And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the loving kindness of Jehovah, that I die not; but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no, not when Jehovah hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, And Jehovah will require it at the hand of David's enemies.

It appears that Jonathan was fully convinced that David would eventually succeed Saul as king (cf. 1 Sam. 24: 20-22), but that did not in any way keep Jonathan from wanting the friendship which existed between him and David, to continue between their two houses. And it can be said with confidence that the annals of human history contain no greater example of human friendship, than that which was displayed by Jonathan. David continued to be in exile from the fury of Saul, until the latter met his death on mount Gilboa, yet he appears to have had a happier lot than that which belonged to Jonathan; for the weary years of Jonathan were years of wild and painful tragedy. His father, as has already been pointed out, had frequent spasms of insanity; gusts of madness swept over him, which resulted in his being a madman with the king's unlimited power, breaking out frequently in fits of ungov-

enable ferocity, flinging his deadly weapons at those who happened to be nearest to him, and raging against all who disputed his word.

Surely if there was ever a case in which a son's disobedience would have been justified, in was in the case of Jonathan. But it is a recorded fact that Jonathan was never guilty of unbecoming conduct toward his father. No one can ever, in this life, know what Jonathan had to endure through those sad, dark years, after David came into his life; but even so, he held on to his father to the last. There is not a breath of disaffection which stains the pages of his history. There are few examples in the annals of time like Jonathan's example, although there are scores of instances of a son's loyalty to a worthy father. And when we think of Jonathan in this light, it will better enable us to appreciate David's dirge over Saul and Jonathan, when he said,

"Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided. . . .

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!

Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:

Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women." (2 Sam. 1: 23-26.)

And Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that he had for him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

W. G. Blaikie has observed that there was one feature of the friendship between Jonathan and David, which has no parallel in classic times. It was a friendship between two men, one of whom was a most formidable rival to the throne which

ordinarily would have gone to the other. And it was Jonathan whose star was the brother, for he stood to gain the least, while losing the most. And notwithstanding all this, it was Jonathan who deliberately sought out and took the lead in bringing about this friendship. He knew that God had ordained that David was to succeed his father on the throne, yet he loved the younger man with all his heart. Furthermore, Jonathan knew that to befriend David was to offend his father, yet he made every effort possible to see to it that the life of David was not sacrificed by the wrath of his father. Jonathan knew that he would have to decrease, while David would increase, yet there was not a particle of envy or jealousy which disturbed his noble spirit. Jonathan's love was truly great; it was a love which was willing, and gladly so, to sacrifice everything for the object of its devotion. Looking at Jonathan's love from the human point of view, he had nothing to gain from the friendship of the youthful David, while the advantages which would accrue from it for the latter were almost unlimited.

But Jonathan did gain something, namely, the incomparable fellowship with a lovely, pure, and lofty soul. There is always the knitting of soul to soul in genuine friendship, the exchange of one heart for another. The exquisite description of the beginning of the classical friendship, which we have been considering in this study, never grows old to those who are thoughtful and appreciative, namely, "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit was the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." A union like this is formed, not to be broken; but if it is severed, it is accompanied by indescribable suffering and grief.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why is this lesson of so much interest and value to those who study it?
What are some of the principles of genuine friendship?

How did the friendship between Jonathan and David have its beginning?
How did Jonathan go about confirming his great friendship for David?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstance were the words of the golden text written?

Who is the friend who sticks closer than a brother?

What kind of an impression should the thought of the golden text make on us?

Why do so many people regard friendship so lightly?

Why should people exercise care in forming their friendships?

Jonathan Intercedes for David

Why should all the record pertaining to a given lesson be read when studying it?

What are the principal facts between the last lesson and this one?

In what way did Saul manifest his insincerity to David?

How did David conduct himself all through those trying times and what lesson is there for us?

What important principle for righteous living did Jonathan manifest in his attitude toward David?

What lesson does Jesus make plain for his followers today regarding this?

David Is Reassured by Jonathan

How long did Saul keep his promise to Jonathan regarding David and why did he break it?

What was Jonathan's and David's next move?

Discuss the role of Jonathan in this great drama of friendship.

The Covenant between Jonathan and David Expanded and Confirmed with an Oath

How could Jonathan be such a devoted friend to David in view of the fact that he apparently fully realized that David would one day succeed Saul as king?

In what way did Jonathan request that the covenant between David and him be expanded?

What does a comparison of the records of the two men reveal regarding their respective lots?

How was it possible for Jonathan to be loyal to both David and his father Saul?

How did David feel regarding Jonathan's loyalty to Saul and upon what do we base our conclusion?

What one feature of this classic example of friendship is without parallel in human history?

How fully was Jonathan informed regarding the situation which confronted him in maintaining this friendship with David?

Why was his friendship for the young hero so noble?

What were some of the gains which Jonathan received from this relationship?

What happens when a friendship like this is broken?

Lesson IX—June 1, 1969

DAVID SHOWS MERCY TO SAUL

Lesson Text

1 Sam. 26: 5-12, 17, 21

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Ab'-ner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped round about him.

6 Then answered David and said to A-him'-e-lech the Hit'-tite, and to A-bi'-shai the son of Ze-ru'-iah, brother to Jo'-ab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And A-bi'-shai said, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and A-bi'-shai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Ab'-ner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then said A-bi'-shai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time.

9 And David said to A-bi'-shai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Je-ho'-vah's anointed, and be guiltless?

10 And David said, As Je-ho'-vah liveth, Je-ho'-vah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish.

11 Je-ho'-vah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Je-ho'-vah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Je-ho'-vah was fallen upon them.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my life

was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.”* (Rom. 12: 19.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 21: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

May 26. M.....	David Spares Saul's Life (1 Sam. 26: 5-12)
May 27. T.....	Popularity of David (1 Sam. 18: 1-5)
May 28. W.....	Saul Envy David (1 Sam. 18: 6-9)
May 29. T.....	Saul Seeks to Kill David (1 Sam. 18: 10-16)
May 30. F.....	David Escapes (1 Sam. 26: 1-6)
May 31. S.....	Saul Confesses (1 Sam. 26: 21-25)
June 1. S.....	David's Dependence on God (Psalm 28: 1-9)

TIME.—1060 B.C.

PLACE.—The hill of Hachilah in the wilderness of Ziph.

PERSONS.—Saul, Abner, David, and Abishai.

Introduction

It is always in order for those who study the Bible to consider well the historical facts of the Old Testament; but it is more important that we endeavor to discover just what lesson they have for us today. 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.) The people who lived during the Old Testament period were human beings, just as we are; and it is a fact, capable of being demonstrated, that the same human nature which characterized them, also characterizes us. Human nature is substantially the same in all ages of the world; and the only way in which it can be overcome, is by becoming partakers of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1: 5-11.)

If we can determine the motives which influenced the people in former dispensations, it will not be difficult for us to see that the same motives will, in all probability, lead us to do the same things. This was not the first time that Saul had tried to kill David, nor the first time that David had spared the life of Saul. (1 Sam. 24: Iff.) Both men therefore had had other opportunities for doing as they did on the occasion of the lesson now before us; and this clearly indicates that their respective actions were not the result of immediate impulses, but rather to

their habitual way of thinking; for it is always true that as one thinks within himself, so is he. (Cf. Prov. 23: 7.) Saul was filled with envy and jealousy, when the women singers ascribed greater achievements to David than they did to him; and he "eyed David from that day and forward." (See 1 Sam. 18: 6-9.)

David, on the other hand, had no desire to kill Saul; and it came to pass, that when such an opportunity presented itself to him, he was never tempted to take the life of his arch rival, even though he knew full well that Saul was vigorously seeking to kill him. There are few more important lessons in the Old Testament for us, than the one contained in this study. Professed Christians, of course, seldom want to take the life of a fellow man; but there are many of them, including preachers, who gladly seize the opportunity to kill the influence, and destroy the good name, of one whom they dislike. Even granting that the object of their antipathy has done wrong, it is not the prerogative of those who dislike them to take the matter of destroying them into their hands: Jehovah has the exclusive right to avenge and administer justice, as we shall see further on in this study. People with the attitude just described should learn, and learn well, that heart-murder is just as real in God's sight, as hand-murder is. (Cf. 1 John 3: 15; Matt. 18: 15-17.)

The Golden Text

"Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." The full context of the statement just quoted is a familiar one, and it is rendered by Phillips in these words: "Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn, to anyone. See that your public behavior is above criticism. As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone. Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends: stand back and let God punish if he will. For it is written:

Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense.

And these are God's words; If thine enemy hunger, feed him; If he thirst, give him to drink: For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.

Don't allow yourself to be overpowered with evil. Take the offensive—overpower evil by good!"

The things which Paul says in the twelfth chapter of Romans may be summed up in these words, namely, The Christian life is a transformed life, the theme of which is expressed in the first two verses of the chapter. And as the apostle develops the theme of his lesson, he calls attention to the various aspects of the life which the followers of Christ must live daily; and as he brings this portion of his letter to a close,

he shows that the Lord's people must be characterized by meekness, rather than by contentiousness and belligerency. If the peace between Christians and other people is broken, it should be due to the attitude and conduct of those who are not striving to serve the Lord. But in case the Lord's people are mistreated, they are not permitted, by divine authority, to undertake to retaliate. All such matters are to be let in the hands of Jehovah. (Cf. Deut. 32: 35; Prov. 25: 21, 22.)

A willingness to follow the course just pointed out stems from the recognition of God, for who and what he is; and when this becomes the fixed principle in the lives of Christian people, it delivers them, both in thought and deed, from the blight of presuming to take over the work which Jehovah has reserved for himself. God-fearing people, when they recognize and remember the Lord for what he is and will do, will hold in check any desire which they may have for punishing their enemies; and will turn the entire matter over to the one to whom such action belongs. Bulwer has pointed out that "revenge is a common passion; it is the sin of the un instructed." He also said, "The savage deems it noble; but the religion of Christ, which is the sublime civilizer, emphatically condemns it. Why? Because religion ever seeks to ennoble man; and nothing so debases him as revenge."

The Text Explained

The Historical Setting

(1 Sam. 26: 5-12)

And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped round about him.

The incident which forms the basis of our lesson for today took place during that period in the life of David, when he was not only a fugitive from Saul, but also the leader of a company of outlaws. It appears that that was about the only way that David had of maintaining himself, during such a time. This is

not to suggest that it was right for David to do all the things which are attributed to him; but rather that circumstances more or less compelled such action. And too, we must take into consideration the times during which David lived, and the standards of morality which were generally accepted.

The whereabouts of David were made known to Saul by the Ziphites, that is, the people who lived in the town of Ziph, which was located about five miles south of Hebron. Nothing is said in the record about why the people of that community wanted Saul to know about the movements of David, but it may have been due to the fact that they

felt that the fugitive could not long evade the king and his army; and, wanting to gain favor with Saul, they decided that it would be to their best interests to disclose to the king the hiding-place of David. This was the second time that the people of Ziph had endeavored to aid Saul in capturing David, as may be seen from the following statement: "Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in the strongholds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of the desert?" (1 Sam. 23: 19.) Ziph was located on an elevation, which rises about a hundred feet above the plain; and it would therefore be fairly easy for the people of that city to see David and his men, as they passed from place to place, in their efforts to survive while hiding from Saul.

When Saul received the information from the Ziphites regarding the hiding-place of David, "he arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come of a certainty." (1 Sam. 26: 2-4.) David and his men were well acquainted with that country; and they doubtless had many advantages over Saul and his army. The fugitives were accustomed to watching for the enemy, and could easily detect any unusual movements in the area where they were.

The inspired historian does not indicate just why David wanted to know of Saul's camp; but the implication is that it was for defensive purposes, and to demonstrate his attitude toward the king. It appears that a barricade was made of the wagons, for the safety of the king (see marginal note), "and the people were encamped round about him." Abner, the captain of the king's host, who played an important role in the reigns of both Saul and David, was Saul's cousin (1 Sam. 14: 50); and upon the death of Saul, Abner made the dead king's

son Ish-bosheth king over Israel, and he reigned for two years, "but the house of Judah followed David." (2 Sam. 2: 8-10.) Abner later transferred his allegiance to David in Hebron (2 Sam. 3: 6ff), and soon thereafter was slain by Joab, in revenge for the death of his brother Ashahel, and because he feared that Abner might supplant him as captain of the king's host. When David heard of the death of Abner, he was deeply grieved, and said unto his servants, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak though anointed king." (See 2 Sam. 3: 38, 39.)

Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the death at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish. Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away; and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.

Nothing more is known of this Ahimelech, who was evidently one of David's warriors, during the time he was hiding from Saul. The fact that he was a Hittite, however, leads one to suspect that he was a fierce contender in warfare; for it appears

that the Hittites were perhaps the strongest, and the most dreaded, of the people of that area. Their footprints are still seen in that section of the country. Abishai, on the other hand, was prominent throughout the reign of David. He and his two brothers, Joab and Asahel, were David's nephews, being sons of his sister. (1 Chron. 2: 13-16.) There is no reason given for mentioning the mother of these three brothers, rather than their father, who is never mentioned; unless he was dead, or because of the unusual character of Zeruiah and her relation to David. There is never a dull moment in the history of Abishai, and any one who is interested in reading all that the Bible says about him, can easily find the references in any good concordance or Bible dictionary. We are not told why Ahimelech did not go with David to Saul's camp; but it appears that Abishai was delighted to make the trip.

The sleep which was upon Saul and his company was no ordinary sleep, as we shall see further on in this lesson; and there is therefore some basis for the suggestion that David may have been directed by the Lord to enter into the camp of the king; or at least that he was in some way divinely led to follow the course which he took. It is interesting to note how often Saul was seen with his spear, after he fell from the favor of the Lord.

The two attitudes which were manifested by David and Abishai in the presence of the sleeping king and his company, were also seen in a similar encounter, as recorded in chapter 24. Those who were with David on that occasion thought that Jehovah had delivered Saul into his hands, and that he therefore should be slain; but in that case, as in the one now before us, David did not share that viewpoint. It appears that David had Abishai under better control at the time of this lesson, than he did later on, as may be seen from that which the king said about him and Joab, following the death of Abner, namely, "and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me." (2 Sam. 3: 29.)

The magnanimity which David manifested toward Saul, on the occasion of the lesson now under con-

sideration, can be correctly regarded as based upon a deep faith in Jehovah. It is true that David's life was in grave danger, so far as the king was concerned; but he had the promise of a greater King, who had Samuel to anoint him to be Saul's successor. Therefore, if David had taken the matter into his own hands, and had allowed Saul to be slain, that would have been a sin in the sight of the Lord. So David, in his reply to Aibshai, mentioned three ordinary ways by which men end their days here upon the earth, namely, (1) by a stroke of divine judgment (cf. Lev. 10: 1, 2); (2) a natural death which, since Saul was older than David would likely come first (Job 42: 17); and (3) as a result of war; and that is exactly what happened to Saul (1 Sam. 31: 1-6). And so, if David had consented to the slaying of Saul by the hands of Abishai, that would have been taking the matter out of God's hands; and that was something which David would not do.

The attitude and action of David toward Saul should be an impressive lesson to us. It sometimes happens that an elder or a preacher does something which is not right, and those who are opposed to him want to get rid of him. But instead of employing the means which the Lord has ordained for such a purpose, those who seek such an "ouster" often resort to actions which are just as sinful, if indeed not more so, in the sight of God, as the alleged wrongdoing of the one whom they are trying to remove from his place. Although the days of miracles, such as those which are mentioned in the Bible, have long since passed, we should not allow ourselves to forget the fact that the providence of God is just as potent, as it ever was; and he has solemnly promised that all things work together for good to those who love him, and are called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8: 28.) And again, "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.) If those who desire the removal of those whom they

consider wrongdoers, are themselves doing the will of God; then they should remember that "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." (See James 5: 16.)

Many of us often forget the fact that the Lord's plans for the peoples of the earth includes his dealing with the wicked, as well as with the righteous; and they both require time. If God cut off the wicked every time they did wrong, then none of them would be saved; and, by the same token, unless he continued to bless the righteous, and encouraged them to continue their spiritual progress, there would be no continual growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. David therefore was determined to refrain from interfering with Jehovah's purpose regarding Saul, as long as the anointing oil was upon them.

Although declining to do anything on the wrong side of the issue with reference to Saul, David did do something which was calculated to make the king know that he had no desire to kill him. Saul could not help but know that David did have an opportunity to take his life, something that Saul would gladly have done, if their situations had been reversed; and that must have made a deep impression upon the king, in spite of his mental and moral condition. Matthew Henry calls David's action with reference to his dealing with Saul, on this occasion, the preference of his conscience to his interest, with the result that he trusted God with the issue. This was in complete harmony with the letter and spirit of the passage in which the words of the golden text are found. The "deep sleep from Jehovah." The same original word which describes the deep sleep that fell upon Adam is found here. (Gen. 2: 21, 22.) It has already been noted that this implies that David's actions in going to Saul, and sparing his life, were in keeping with the will of the Lord.

Saul Made Aware of David's Presence

(1 Sam. 26: 17)

And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son

David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

After David and Abishai took the spear and the cruse of water from near the head of the sleeping king, they "went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them; and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not. Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? And David said to Abner, Art thou not a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, Jehovah's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head." (Verses 13-16.) That which David said was spoken in irony, and it evidently had its effect upon Saul and the people; and if Saul had not realized the situation, he doubtless would have put Abner to death.

Jamieson says that the extraordinary purity and elasticity of the air in Palestine make it possible for words to be distinctly heard and understood, which are spoken on the top of one hill and addressed to those on the top of another, the two elevations being separated by a deep ravine. Hostile parties therefore can speak to each other, while completely out of the reach of each other's attack. After David had addressed his words to Abner, he then called upon him to look and see where the king's spear and cruse of water were. All of this must have caused the captain of the host to be filled with humiliating embarrassment and deep mortification.

Saul's Reaction to David's Magnanimity

(1 Sam. 26: 21)

Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my soil David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

If one should look at the words of Saul for that which they actually said, then his confession of sin and his expressed determination to do better, would appear to be all that one could desire; but David had heard similar words from the king before. (Read 1 Sam. 24: 16-22.) While David seemingly would not trust himself in Saul's immediate presence, he did request the king to send for the spear, and added, "And Jehovah will render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness; forasmuch as Jehovah delivered thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth my hand

against Jehovah's anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of Jehovah, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation." The words just quoted show where David placed his trust; and they brought forth this reply from the king: "Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail." David then went his way, and Saul returned to his place. When one demonstrates that he cannot be trusted, it is then better to avoid him.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Why is it important to consider well all the historical facts of the Old Testament?

What makes those facts both interesting and important?

Why should we endeavor to understand the motives of people in former ages?

How is the principle illustrated in the lives of Saul and David?

What very important truth should we learn from the study of this lesson?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Paul write the words which serve as the golden text for today's lesson?

What particular aspect of the Christian life is emphasized in this connection?

Who should be responsible if a Christian does not enjoy peace with others?

How should the Lord's people regard those who sin against them?

When people are willing to allow the Lord to avenge the wrongs which they suffer, what does that show regarding them?

What effect does the seeking of personal vengeance have on the individual who undertakes it?

The Historical Setting

During what period in the lives of Saul and David did the events of this lesson take place?

Why did David lead the kind of life which characterized him at that time?

How did Saul learn of the whereabouts of David?

Why did the people of Ziph endeavor to

make it possible for Saul to capture David?

Discuss the setting which enabled David to contact king Saul.

Who were Abishai and Abner?

What is suggested by the deep sleep which fell upon Saul and his company?

What two attitudes were manifested toward the king by David and Abishai?

Why was David able to place his trust in the Lord so completely?

What valuable lesson should we learn from him regarding such matters?

What possible reason do we have for saying that God does not punish sin and reward righteousness immediately?

What did David do which greatly affected Saul, at least temporarily?

Saul Made Aware of David's Presence

How did Saul and the people with him come to know that David had been near the king?

Why did David address himself to Abner as he did?

In what manner did Saul evidently regard the remarks of David to the captain of his host?

Why did David ask Abner to look and see where the king's spear and cruse of water were?

How must David's words have affected Abner?

Why would David want to humiliate the head of Saul's army?

Saul's Reaction to David's Magnanimity

How did Saul react toward David when he learned that the latter had spared his life?

Why didn't David accept Saul's words as being genuine?

How did the king get his spear back?

What important lesson should we learn from all of this?

Lesson X—June 8, 1969

DAVID, KING OVER ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Lesson Text

2 Sam. 2: 1-7; 5: 1-5

1 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of Je-ho'-vah, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Ju'-dah? And Je-ho'-vah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto He'-bron.

2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, A-hin'-o-am the Jez'-re-el-i-tess, and Ab'-i-gail the wife of Na'-bal the Car'-mel-ite.

3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of He'-bron.

4 And the men of Ju'-dah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Ju'-dah.

And they told David, saying, The men of Ja'-besh-gil'-e-ad were they that buried Saul.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Ja'-besh-gil'-e-ad, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Je-ho'-vah, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now Je'-ho-vah show lovingkindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Ju'-dah have anointed me king over them.

1 Then came all the tribes of Is'-ra-el to David unto He'-bron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Is'-ra-el: and Je-ho'-vah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Is'-ra-el, and thou shalt be prince over Is'-ra-el.

3 So all the elders of Is'-ra-el came to the king to He'-bron; and king David made a covenant with them in He'-bron before Je-ho'-vah: and they anointed David king over Is'-ra-el.

4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

5 In He'-bron he reigned over Ju'-dah seven years and six months; and in Je'-ru'-sa-lem he reigned thirty and three years over all Is'-ra-el and Ju'-dah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*And David waxed stronger and stronger.*” (2 Sam. 3: 1.)
DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Sam. 1: 1-17.

Daily Bible Readings

June 2.	M.....	David, King of Judah (2 Sam. 2: 1-7)
June 3.	T.....	Israel Accepts David as King (2 Sam. 5: 1-5)
June 4.	W.....	“David Waxed Greater” (2 Sam. 5: 6-10)
June 5.	T.....	Promise of God to David (1 Chron. 17: 7-15)
June 6.	F.....	David Returns the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6: 12-19)
June 7.	S.....	David's Faith in God (1 Chron. 17: 16-27)
June 8.	S.....	God Speaks to David (2 Sam. 7: 18-29)

TIME.—1055-1048 B.C.

PLACE.—Hebron.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, David, and the people.

Introduction

The chapters between our last lesson and this one should be read, so that we can better see and understand the setting of the lesson which we shall study today. After Saul had confessed his folly in seeking

the life of David, and the latter had told him how he felt about the matter, the historian said, “So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.” And then, as chapter 27 opens, we read, “And David said in

his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand."

And having reached the conclusion just mentioned, David, and his six hundred men, and all that they had, went to "Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath." Later on, David and his men were given the city of Ziklag, in the southern part of the country; and there they made their home. Some time later, David and his men made a raid on some of the people in that general area; but in his report to Achish, David led Achish to believe that the raid had actually been made on David's own people, that is, on the people of Israel. This caused Achish to think that David was now alienated from his people. "And Achish believed David, saying, He had made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever."

Chapter 28 gives the account of Saul's effort, through the witch of En-dor, to communicate with the departed Samuel; with the result that Samuel did tell Saul what was going to happen to him, and why. David and his men made as if they would accompany the Philistines into battle with Israel; but they

were turned back by the lord's of the Philistines. When they, that is David and his men, returned to Ziklag, they found that the city had been burned by the Amalekites, and that their families had been carried away captive by them. But David and his followers pursued the Amalekites, destroyed their army, and brought back all that had been taken captive by them. David then took some of the spoil which they had brought back, and used it to express his thanks to the people who had befriended him during his wanderings.

Then came the fatal battle of Israel with the Philistines, which resulted in the death of Saul and three of his sons, including Jonathan, and the mutilation of Saul's body. All four of these bodies were cremated, and their remains were buried by the men of Jabesh-gilead, in grateful memory of that which Saul had done for them at the beginning of his reign. The news of the death of Saul and Jonathan was brought to David at Ziklag, by a man who thought that he would please David by telling him that he himself had killed Saul; but David had the messenger slain then and there. David's dirge for Saul and Jonathan is a classic example of drawing the mantle of charity over the lives of those who have gone into eternity; and it is probably the forerunner of the modern funeral eulogy.

The Golden Text

"And David waxed stronger and stronger." The words just quoted are found in the midst of the following historical record: "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: and David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." If one will keep in mind the attitudes which were manifested by Saul and David during the time they were both living, that is, between the time of the anointing of David by Samuel, and the death of Saul, it will not be difficult for him to realize why David continued to grow stronger and stronger. David always took God into consideration. It is true that he frequently made mistakes, sometimes grave ones; but he

never failed to return to the Lord, and implore his forgiveness. Not only was David's righteous attitude manifested during the lifetime of Saul; it continued to show itself even after the king's death, as may be gathered from the following paragraphs.

The elegy which David composed and sang in his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan has been referred to as the Song of the Bow, probably because of the archers of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 31: 3.) Blaikie, in commenting on David's lamentation, says, "What gentler view could be drawn over their bloody death and mutilated bodies than in the tender words, 'Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths

they were not divided'? And what more fitting theme for tears could have been furnished to the daughters of Israel, considering what was probably the prevalent taste, than that Saul had "clothed them with scarlet and other delights, and put on ornaments of gold upon their apparel'? Up to this point Saul and Jonathan are joined together; but the poet cannot close without a special lamentation for himself over him whom he loved as his own soul. And in one line he touches the very kernel of his own loss, as he touches the very core of Jonathan's heart—"thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." Such is the Song of the Bow." (*The Expositor's Bible, in loco.*)

The experience which had been David's with Saul, and especially the closing years and death of the latter, must have had a profound effect upon the character of the psalmist and king-designate. David could not have given expression to these "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" without having his whole soul stirred with the desire to do something to restore prosperity and honor to Israel again. His heart

was saddened by the afflictions which he was compelled to bear, and was sobered by the stroke of prosperity which raised him to the throne; and the two together must have impelled in him a course of action which, under God, is the best safeguard against the harmful influences of both adversity and prosperity. Affliction tends to drive one to think primarily of himself, that is, of his own welfare, while prosperity fills one with a sense of his own importance; and he is blessed indeed who is kept from either and both of these extremes. (Cf. Prov. 30: 8, 9.) It appears that David was providentially kept from both of the pitfalls just referred to; and was eminently fitted, because of the long training through which he had passed, for the great work which was before him, as the king of God's people; and no one should be surprised, as he continues to read of his life and character as the ruler of the people of Israel, to note that he continued to wax stronger and stronger. No king of the Lord's people ever attained the heights to which David ascended.

The Text Explained

David Made King over Judah

(2 Sam. 2: 1-4a)

And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

The events referred to in the expression "after this" were the great defeat of Israel at mount Gilboa, and David's reaction to the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. The people of Israel were not only disconcerted; the Philistines were largely in command of the situation in the land of Canaan. The paragraph containing

verses 8-11, of the chapter from which the lesson text for today's lesson is taken, is evidently greatly abbreviated; but it should be considered in connection with the section of the lesson text we are now dealing with, along with the following section. It appears that Abner, who had been Saul's army chief, took Ish-bosheth, the fourth and only remaining son of Saul (see marginal note), to the eastern side of the Jordan, and made him king over Gilead, which had not been overrun by the Philistines, immediately following the death of Saul.

And then, immediately following the crowning of Ish-bosheth in Gilead, it appears that Abner set to work to drive the Philistines out of the territory west of the Jordan which, according to Josiah White, quoted by William M. Taylor probably took about five and one half years. If the conquering of the land west of the Jordan River followed the order mentioned in verse 9, it would appear that as Abner reached

the borders of Judah, which was David's stronghold, he caused Ish-bosheth to be proclaimed king over all the recovered territory of Israel. And this, apparently, was what touched off the long war between the houses of Saul and David. Furthermore, if the reference to the length of Ish-bosheth's reign was to the time he ruled "all Israel," then that was probably the length of the war between the two houses just mentioned. And too, if what has just been said is true, then the two-years' reign of Ish-bosheth coincided with the last part of David's seven-and-one-half-years' reign in Judah.

Notwithstanding the fact that David knew that he was destined to be king over the Lord's people, and that the death of Saul naturally indicated that the time had arrived for him to ascend the throne, yet his faith was such that he made no effort in that direction, until he asked for and received instruction from Jehovah regarding the matter. This motivation of faith on David's part is all the more remarkable, when we consider the fact that many men of war had come to his assistance, while he remained in Ziklag. (1 Chron. 12.) The title which is given to the Twenty-Seventh Psalm, in some versions of the Ancient Scriptures, has led some Bible students to think that it was written by David during this period of his life. The title of the psalm just referred to, as given in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, is "Before the Anointing," which could very well have been before the anointing in Hebron, at the time of our lesson for today; but whether that is true or not, the psalm in question does give an impressive view of the philosophy of life which characterized the sweet singer of Israel, and which made him such a trustful servant of the Lord. We know from the text now under consideration, that that was the way that David felt, when he made inquiry of the Lord, before leaving Ziklag to go to Hebron. This is the lesson which we should learn here.

Hebron was the metropolis and capital of the tribe of Judah, and was located some nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, in one of the richest sections of the country.

The city was one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities in Palestine, having been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. (Num. 13: 22.) Some of the most hallowed memories of the patriarchs are associated with Hebron, as may be seen by reading the accounts of them in the Book of Genesis. It was in the city of Hebron that David reigned for seven and one half years, before moving on to Jerusalem, which he captured from the Jebusites. (2 Kings 5: 6-10; 1 Chron. 11: 4-9.) Hebron is still a thriving community, with the inhabitants tending the surrounding land, manufacturing the famous hand-blown blue Hebron glass, and weaving black tent cloth from goats' hair.

Although polygamy was tolerated in Hebrew society, the law of Moses was very specific regarding the king in this respect, as may be seen from the following statute, namely, "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." (Deut. 17: 14-17.) But David continued to practice polygamy and established a harem; and by doing so, he sowed the seed of disorder and disunion in his own household, which produced a rank harvest of bitter fruit in his later life. (Cf. Gal. 6: 7, 8.) The names of several of David's wives are found in 2 Samuel 3: 2-5. In addition to taking his own household to Hebron, when he left Ziklag; he also took with him the men who had followed him during his exile, and their families; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron, that is, the suburbs or adjacent communities.

The anointing which the men of Judah made for David, on the occasion of this lesson, was the second of the three royal anointings which he received with reference to his kingship. He was first anointed by Samuel, by which he received the right to the kingdom—*ius ad regnum*; at the time of this lesson he was anointed by the men of Judah, which gave him the actual authority over the kingdom, although at first it was limited to Judah only—*ius in regno*; and he was later anointed to be king over all Israel, as we shall see further on in this lesson. The parts of the Lord's people, other than Judah, were being ruled over by Ish-bosheth, or were being ruled

over by him during the latter part of David's reign in Hebron, as we have already seen.

David's Magnanimity Further Exemplified

(2 Sam. 2: 4b-7)

And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Jehovah, that he have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now Jehovah show lovingkindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

It has already been pointed out in these studies that the men of Jabesh-gilead never forgot the kindness, which Saul showed them at the beginning of his reign. (1 Sam. 11: 1-11.) And so, when Saul and his three sons died on the battlefield of mount Gilboa, and were maltreated by the victorious Philistines, the men of Jabesh, in the land of Gilead, east of the Jordan, performed a bold and dangerous service in recovering their bodies, and seeing to it that their remains were appropriately buried. Such action on their part could prove to be very obnoxious to a contender for the throne which had been occupied by Saul; but David hastened to assure them that he was highly pleased with that which they had done. He further invoked God's blessings upon them, and assured them that he, too, would reward their heroic service. This attitude on the part of David was in keeping with his noble character in trying to treat all men as they should be treated, while leaving any punishment which they might deserve in the hands of God. This is a lesson which is sorely needed by professed Christians today.

There can be no doubt about David's sincerity with reference to his message to the men of Jabesh-gilead, but it was at the same time a stroke of sound and timely policy on

his part. The people of Jabesh were living in a part of the county which was then being ruled over by Ish-bosheth, and the new king of Judah was saying, in effect, that they could expect the same kind of protection from him, should they be exposed to danger, which was extended to them by their former beloved king Saul, when Nahash threatened them; and it was fair to expect, on the part of David, that when the report of this gesture became generally known, they would also be kindly disposed toward him. There is, however, no indication that the people of Jabesh-gilead made any response to David's overtures, and neither is there any solid evidence that David was expecting any such response; but it is interesting to note the delicate manner in which he made his coronation by the men of Judah known to them, namely, "Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me to be king over them."

David Also Made King over Israel

(2 Sam. 5: 1-5)

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah: and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

One naturally gathers from the record that Ish-bosheth was entirely indebted to Abner for his position of king over the people of Israel. The break between these two men is described in 2 Samuel 3: 6-11, where the king accused the latter of intimacy with his father's concubine. It was customary in those days for the man who succeeded to the throne to have the wives and concubines of his predecessor; and for

any one else to attempt to take one of them for himself, was regarded as being nothing short of a claim to the throne. (Cf. 2 Sam. 16: 15-23; 20: 3; 1 Kings 2: 10-25.)

The record is not clear as to the actual truth of Ish-bosheth's charge against Abner, with reference to his father's concubine; but the latter reacted violently to the charge, as may be seen from the following account, namely, "Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head that belongeth to Judah? This day do I show kindness unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David: and yet thou chargest me this day with a fault concerning this woman. God do so to Abner, and more also, if, as Jehovah hath sworn to David, I do not even so to him; to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba." (2 Sam. 3: 8-10.) The expression "from Dan even to Beer-sheba" was equivalent to saying from one end of the country to the other; and when Ish-bosheth heard the words of his military leader, and former benefactor, he could not answer him a word, because he feared him. (See verse 11.)

Abner took immediate steps to make good his threat to Ish-bosheth, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul to David, and sent messengers to the latter, with the request that he make a league with him, with the avowed intention of bringing all Israel into the fold of the king of Judah. David replied to the request of Abner by saying that he was willing to make a league with him, but only on the condition that his former wife Michal, who had been taken from David and given to another man, be returned to him. This condition was promptly met, after David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Paltiel the son of Laish. And her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim. Then said

Abner unto him, Go, return: and he returned." (2 Sam. 3: 12-16.)

Following the incident regarding the return of Michal to David, Abner then got in touch with the elders of Israel and the people of Benjamin, and made satisfactory arrangements with them with reference to the transfer of the kingdom of Israel from Ish-bosheth to David; and then, with twenty men, he went to David to Hebron. "And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thy soul desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace." (2 Sam. 3: 17-21.)

After Abner had left David in peace, the former's arch rival Joab came into Hebron from a foray; and when he heard that David had sent Abner away in peace, he was greatly incensed, and rebuked the king severely for his peaceful action toward Abner. And then, after coming out from the presence of David, Joab sent messengers after Abner, and had him returned to the city, where he and his brother Abishai murdered him in cold blood. This action deeply grieved David, and by conducting himself with becoming dignity, reverence, and God-likeness, he was also able to convince the people that he in no way condoned it, or had anything to do with the plot to murder the strong man of the rival kingdom. The turn of events also disturbed Ish-bosheth, and he was soon murdered in his own house by two of his captains, who thought that David would be pleased with their action; but he had them killed as soon as he heard of their wicked deed. It was after these things that the tribes of Israel came to David, in Hebron, with the proposal that he become king over all the people in both Judah and Israel. The full account of this great assembly is given in 1 Chronicles 12: 23-40. And it appears that soon after David became king over all the people, that he went up to Jerusalem, captured the city, and made it his capital. That city, in time, became known as the city of David.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Give a resume of the principle facts of history between this lesson and the last one.

What was David's general outlook on life at this time, and what did he do about it?

In what way did Saul end his reign as king?

The Golden Text

In what connection were the words of the golden text written?

To what did David owe his continual growth in strength?

How did David express his feeling for Saul and Jonathan following their death?

What effect did the discipline which David received during his conflict with Saul have on his general preparation for the kingship which was in store for him?

What can you say of the importance of discipline in the life of any Christian?

David Made King over Judah

What were the immediate events which led up to the time of this lesson?

Who was Abner and what part did he play in the drama of the opposition to David?

Apparently how long did it take Abner to gain control of the occupied territory of Israel?

What was the attitude which David manifested during the time when Abner was promoting the cause of the house of Saul?

What information do we apparently have regarding David during this period?

What important lesson should we learn in this connection?

Where was Hebron and how did David come to go there to reign as king over Judah?

Who accompanied David to Hebron?

What did the law of Moses say regarding polygamy on the part of the king?

How many times and under what circumstances was David anointed in connection with his kingship?

David's Magnanimity Further Exemplified

Who were the men of Jabesh-gilead and why did David take an interest in them?

What apparently was David's motive in sending the message to them?

Why would such a message to those people be advisable?

David Also Made King over Israel

What was the relationship which existed between Abner and Ish-bosheth?

What was the cause of the break between them?

Why was it a serious matter for some one other than the king to attempt to take a wife of the former king?

What did Abner do after this encounter with Ish-bosheth?

How did David react to Abner's proposal to him?

What was done to meet the king's condition?

What happened to Abner after this and why?

How was David affected by the death of Abner?

What was the general feeling on the part of the people toward him in this respect?

What is said regarding the coronation of David to be king over Israel?

Lesson XI—June 15, 1969

DAVID'S GREAT SIN

Lesson Text

2 Sam. 12: 1-10, 13

1 And Je-ho'-vah sent Na'-than unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds;

3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd,

to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Na'-than, As Je-ho'-vah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die;

6 And he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 And Na'-than said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el, I anointed thee king over Is'-ra-el, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Is'-ra-el and of Ju'dah; and if that had been too little, I would have added unto thee such and such things.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Je-ho'-vah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten U-ri'-ah the Hit'-tite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Am'-mon.

10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of ü-ri'-ah the Hit'-tite to be thy wife.

13 And David said unto Na'-than, I have sinned against Je-ho'-vah. And Na'-than said unto David, Je-ho'-vah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah."* (Psalm 31: 9.)
 DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 51: 1-17.

Daily Bible Readings

June 9. M.....	David's Grievous Sin (2 Sam. 11: 1-27)
June 10. T.....	Nathan Rebukes David (2 Sam. 12: 1-10)
June 11. W.....	David Confesses His Sin (Psalm 51: 1-17)
June 12. T.....	Penitence and Pardon (Isa. 55: 6-13)
June 13. F.....	David Repents (2 Sam. 12: 11-15)
June 14. S.....	Joy of Forgiveness (Psalm 32: 1-6)
June 15. S.....	Jehovah's Lovingkindness (Psalm 103: 8-14)

TIME.—1034 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Nathan, and David.

Introduction

The greatest problem which faces the human race today is that of sin. There are, of course, other problems which affect mankind, but they are all related to sin in some way. We have observed sin in all of the lessons of the quarter now before us, but we have not stopped to consider sin in detail, as we shall in the lesson for today. Sin, its consequences, and its forgiveness are all emphasized in the text which we shall consider. One of the remarkable things about the Bible, and one of the reasons why we know that it is of divine origin, is because it portrays the sins of its heroes, as well as their virtues, along with the sins and good deeds of all other men. No effort is ever made to conceal the wrongdoings of the people who are called by the Lord's name. No attempt is ever made to cover their sins from the sight of others, but it is always the aim of the Lord to bring them to repentance and forgiveness. This, however, can only be done by making the individual sinner realize his sin, and by bringing him to the point where he is willing to admit that he has indeed sinned. No per-

son will ever repent of a sin which he will not confess; hence, confession, repentance, and the request for forgiveness are the steps which must be taken by the erring child of God, who wants to be restored to the Lord's favor.

The account of the sin of David, which we are to study at this time, is found in the eleventh chapter of the book from which the lesson text for today is taken, which should be read at this time. The inspired record clearly shows that David was guilty of the sin of adultery, of deceit, and of murder, to mention only three of the sins which are depicted by the sacred historian. The effort to hide one's sins from the sight of others began in the garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve endeavored to conceal theirs from Jehovah; but no one, from that time until this, has ever been successful in such an endeavor. There is something about sin which makes the offenders want to cover it (cf. John 3: 19-21), and there are two ways which men have tried in this respect, a wrong way (Prov. 28: 13), and a right way (Psalm 85: 2); and that is a lesson

which we all should learn. David tried the wrong way at first; but when that failed, as it always will, he then turned to the right way, followed it, and received the Lord's forgiveness.

It should be of interest to all of us to ask, Why would a man like David even want to commit such a monstrous sin, as the one which was charged against him? The answer to this question, however, does not concern David alone; for the principle involved, as we shall see in this study, is applicable to all of us. But the facts in the life of David do bring to light, in an admirable manner, some of the forerunners of such a fall as that which he experienced. In the first place, as the facts in the preceding chapters clearly indicate, David had been enjoying a life of almost unbroken prosperity. He hardly knew what it meant for him

to suffer defeat, or to have his personal popularity questioned by any of his people. This naturally led to a season of idleness; and so, instead of leading his army, as other kings led theirs, David "tarried at Jerusalem." It is at such a time as this that Satan comes to a man, and makes his appeal where passion is the strongest, and principle is the weakest. This was true in the case of David, for it is a well known fact that his love for many women was emphasized in his life; and it was therefore natural for him to be on the lookout for other women who might be attracted to him, or who might possibly be added to his harem. It is certain that David would not have yielded to the temptation with respect to Bath-sheba, if he had been governed in his life by principle, rather than by passion. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 22.)

The Golden Text

"Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah." Bible students are not agreed as to the period in the life of David when the Thirty-first Psalm was written. Spurgeon says that some Bible students have thought that it grew out of the treachery of the men of Keilah (1 Sam. 23: 1-13), and that he himself at one time was inclined to accept that viewpoint; but he later decided that the circumstances surrounding the rebellion of Absalom probably fitted the situation better, but he was not entirely convinced that such was the actual case. But regardless of when, and under what circumstances, the psalm was written, it does bring to light the innermost feelings of David, as he relied upon Jehovah for mercy. It is almost certain that both the Thirty-second and the Fifty-first Psalms were directly related to David's prayer and thankfulness for forgiveness for his sin with Bath-sheba—the Fifty-first Psalm, his actual prayer for forgiveness; while the Thirty-second Psalm expresses his gratitude for the forgiveness which was accorded him.

All people, who are in the flesh, are in constant need of God's mercy; and it will do all of us good to read the context in which the words of the golden text are found. Space here will not allow the reproduction of the whole psalm, but

verses 9 through 15 are quoted, namely, "Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah, for I am in distress: mine eye wasteth away with grief, yea, my soul and my body. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are wasted away. Because of all mine adversaries I am become a reproach, yea, unto my neighbors exceedingly, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the defaming of many, terror on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in thee, O Jehovah: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me."

There is hardly a psalm which David wrote in which he does not, in one way or another, utter a cry for mercy, while some of them are classics in the literature of penitence. And during the long years of their existence, they have proved to be both a challenge and a solace to countless thousands of men and women who, having realized something of the enormity of their sins

and hopelessness, have been filled with self-loathing and a sincere desire for reconciliation with God. David was a king, and had mighty men and an army to do his bidding, and yet he was in constant need of God's mercy. At times he was a helpless sinner, and was wholly undone without God's help. But he quickly

learned that when he did fall into sin, he could, in penitence, turn to Jehovah for the help he so desperately needed. This is a wonderful lesson for all of us; for as long as we are here upon the earth, we are subject to the trials and temptations of the evil one. (Cf. Heb. 4: 14-16; 1 Cor. 10: 13; James 1: 5-8.)

The Text Explained

David's Sin Parabolically Disclosed and His Reaction

(2 Sam. 12: 1-6)

And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

The term "prophet" literally means one who speaks for another; and since Nathan spoke for Jehovah, he was, of course, a prophet of Jehovah. Sometimes God commanded his prophets to speak of future events and people; but very often their messages were in the form of contemporary preaching. In the closing verses of the preceding chapter, the passage which tells of David's great sin, we read: "And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased Jeho-

vah." The last sentence of the passage just quoted gives the reason for Jehovah's sending Nathan to David. We are not told how long it was after the sin was committed before the prophet was sent to David, but judging from the information contained in 2 Samuel 11: 27 and 12: 14, it must have been the greater part of a year. The Thirty-second Psalm indicates that there was an interval following the sin in question, during which David failed to admit or say anything about it; but he does reveal something of the horror and suffering which he experienced during that period.

A parable is an effective method of getting an unwelcome truth before one who needs to be taught a lesson. It is possible that similar complaints of unfair and vicious treatment of the poor had often been made to David; and he evidently thought that Nathan was bringing to his attention another such act of wickedness. The plan used by the prophet had the advantage of getting David to commit himself regarding the principle involved, before he realized that he was the actual offender. David passed judgment on himself, so that when the real truth was made known to him, he could not claim that he was being unfairly treated. The parable itself is so simple and true to life, that no one can miss the lesson which it was meant to teach. And if we are willing to apply the principle it contains to ourselves, we will often be made to realize how sinful we are, and how great is our need for the Lord's mercy.

David's indignation was greatly aroused by the parable which Nathan spoke to him; but it is a noticeable fact that his own consciousness was not touched by it. Or, which is the same thing, while he was fatally continuing in his own

sin (it would have been fatal, if he had not turned from it), he was ready to condemn, in a severe manner, the wrongdoings of others. And, as is usually the case, David went further than the law warranted. The law of Moses did provide for the fourfold restoration of a sheep which had been unlawfully taken and disposed of (cf. Ex. 22:

1); but it did not authorize the execution of a man for such a crime. But how often do we find people today manifesting the same attitude toward wrongdoers, that David did! It is easy to justify one's own sins; and still easier to condemn the wrongs of others. This kind of attitude is specifically condemned in the New Testament. (Cf. Luke 18: 9-15; Matt. 7: 1-5.)

"Thou Art the Man"

(2 Sam. 12: 7-10)

And Nathan said to David, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added unto thee such, and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

The terrible words, "Thou art the man," which Nathan spoke to David, aroused his conscience to public view, and brought him to his knees. The depth and sincerity of his penitential sorrow may be seen from the Fifty-first Psalm, already referred to, as well as from the Thirty-second and One Hundred and Third Psalms, which should also be read. Jehovah pardoned David for his transgression, insofar as his restoration to Divine favor was concerned; but no effort was made to spare him from the awful consequences of his sin. His fall from the height of his noble character, and from his emi-

nent rank in society, would do great injury to the cause of the Lord; and it was therefore necessary that Jehovah should make known his abhorrence of sin, by leaving his own forgiven servant to reap the bitter fruits of it in this life. Verse 14 says, "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." David himself was not required to die, according to his own view of what justice demanded (see verse 5); but he did have to suffer anguish in the successive untimely deaths of some of his own sons, besides a multitude of other heartbreaking experiences. (Cf. 2 Sam. 12: 15-23; 13: 23-33; 18: 31-33.)

The reference to the giving of the wives of Saul into David's bosom, probably means no more than that they were given into his custody. It has already been pointed out that when any one claimed, or sought to get, the wife of a former ruler of a kingdom for himself, that that was equivalent to a claim for, or an effort to get, the crown itself; and it was probably for that reason that the succeeding king was given the absolute power over the wives of the former king, so that no one else could marry them, and thereby lay claim to the kingdom. But the statement concerning David's contempt for Jehovah and his word, and his guilt of murder, were solemn truths which found a terrible application in the stricken king's life; for he had not only ordered Uriah killed, but even sent the letter containing the death warrant to Joab by the hand of the victim himself. (2 Sam. 11: 14, 15.) The same idea of despising the word of the Lord is found in James 2: 10, where the term "stumble" means to set aside or ignore.

It is a historical fact that the sword did not depart from the house of David, as may be seen by reading the records of the Old Testament. Ammon was killed by the order of his brother Absalom, for assaulting his sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13); Absalom was killed by Joab, after he conspired to take the kingdom from his father (2 Sam., chapters 15, 18); another son, Adonijah, was executed at the command of his brother Solo-

mon, for asking for one of their father's wives (1 Kings 2); and as the house of David neared its earthly end, the sons of king Zedekiah were slain before his eyes by his Babylonian captors, before putting out the eyes of Zedekiah, and taking him in fetters to Babylon (2 Kings 25). There is no way for finite beings to compute the tragedy which came to David and his house, as a result of his sin with Bathsheba.

Confession and Forgiveness of Sin

(2 Sam. 12: 13)

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

To confess one's sin is to admit his guilt; and that is precisely what David did. He knew all the time that he had sinned; but he had never come out into the open and acknowledged it. It is also a noticeable fact that David did not attempt to blame any one for his wrongdoing, but himself. He accepted full responsibility for that which he did; and that is always the attitude one should manifest, if he wants to get rid of his sin. Confession of sin has always been a primary condition of forgiveness; and that is a lesson which we shall always remember. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 9.) One has only to read the account of Cain's attitude toward his murdered brother Abel (Gen. 4), in order to see an attitude which is wholly displeasing to God. There is no forgiveness for the person who will not acknowledge his own sins.

It is generally agreed among Bible students that David was the author of Psalm 32, to which reference has already been made; and that it was very probably written to express his gratitude for the forgiveness which Jehovah granted him, following the events of this lesson. Psalm 51, as already noted, contains David's confession of the sin which he committed with Bathsheba; and no one can read that psalm without being touched by the feeling which was expressed by David, as he humbly

acknowledged the sin which had been charged against him. It is always a heart-rending experience to hear any one cry for mercy, even a hardened criminal; but how much more so, when a deeply penitent child of God pours out his heart to his heavenly Father, and begs for his lovingkindness to rest upon him. As already suggested, the purpose for writing the Thirty-second Psalm was to express the author's gratitude for the mercy and forgiveness which God bestowed upon him, following his confession and penitence, and his petition which he addressed to God. No one could compose psalms like the ones referred to in this paragraph, who has not passed through such an experience as David did. when he heard the awful words, "Thou art the man." And we may be sure that David lost no time in seeking a reconciliation with his heavenly Father.

The opening verses of Psalm 32 may very properly be described as *The Beatitude of Forgiveness*; and the principle which they embody applies, not to David only, but to any one who has sinned and has been forgiven by the heavenly Father. When David made his confession in Psalm 51, he used three words to describe his sin; and when he came to write Psalm 32, he repeated those three terms, and then added a fourth. (1) *Transgression*: to rebel against God's authority; to set oneself against the will and law of God; to cross over a line, or to do that which is expressly forbidden. (2) *Sin*: to miss the mark which God expects the person to aim. in question, or, which is the same thing to miss the mark at which God's expects the person to aim. Not only had Jehovah set bounds across which we must not go; he has also set a mark at which we should aim. To miss this mark therefore, either by commission or omission, is to sin.

(3) *Iniquity*: that which is turned out of its course or proper situation; anything which is morally distorted or perverted. This is the real source of our sin and transgression. Man, beginning with Adam, has been turned out of his proper course or situation by yielding to temptation, with the result that his nature became perverted, so that faithful

obedience to God does not follow. (Cf. Psalm 51: 5; Eph. 2: 1ff.) (4) *Guile*: deception, fraud, treachery. This term has the same basic meaning as the word "bait," which is used to allure fish—something put over the point of the hook to cover it up and thereby deceive the fish, thus leading it to its destruction. (Cf. James 1: 13-16; 2 Cor. 12: 16.) David had employed "guile" in his efforts to deceive his victims, and thereby cover up his sin; but the reproof of Nathan uncovered his soul before his own eyes, and exposed his secret and wicked intention. (Cf. Heb. 4: 12, 13.)

With this fourfold description of wrongdoing before us, we are next made acquainted with the steps which are necessary to remove the guilt, namely, (1) transgression is forgiven; (2) sin is covered; (3) iniquity is not imputed; and (4) the spirit is free from guile. Any man about whom these things can be said, is indeed a happy man; but it is in vain that any one looks for, or has the right to expect, happiness while the guilt and power of sin remain upon him. This is apparently what David had reference to in Psalm 32: 3, 4, when he said, "When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture was changed as with the drought of summer." David had attempted to hide his sin, which the historical record plainly indicates; but the psalm tells us something which the historian passes over, namely, the horror and suffering which the king experienced during that time.

The Hebrew word for "confess" is *yadah*, and it means that when one confesses his sins, he ceases to try to cover them, that is, he admits or acknowledges them. (Cf. Prov. 28: 13.) The Greek word for "confess" is *homologeō*, and its literal meaning is, according to Thayer, to say the same thing as another, that is, agree with him. Thus, when God says that we have sinned, we agree with him and say the same thing, when we confess our sins. There are some definite things implied in a sincere confession of sin, as the following shows.

(1) *Confession of sin reveals a consciousness of guilt.* If this were not true, we would have no confession to make. But just because a man does not feel that he is guilty of sin, does not necessarily prove that he is not a sinner. It may be that his power of spiritual perception is at a low ebb, or that he is not sufficiently acquainted with that which God says about sin. (Cf. John 16: 7ff; 3: 19-21.) (2) *Confession of sin reveals a need for pardon.* When a man's sins are always before him, he must get relief from them, if he is to survive. But we should remember that it is not always an easy thing for one to confess his sins. (3) *Confession of sin shows a humble desire to be pure in heart and life, or, which is the same thing, to be different from other sinners.* There can be no progress in spiritual life, without this desire. But a confession of sin, which is not followed by repentance and obedience to God's law, is simply a useless recitation, unheard in heaven.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What is the greatest problem which faces the human race today? Why?
What reason, in this connection, do we have for thinking that the Bible came from God?
What are the historical facts upon which this lesson is based?
Why do people want to hide their sins?
Why would a man like David want to commit such a sin as the one of this lesson?

The Golden Text

In what context are the words of the golden text found?
What is mercy and why do all people stand in need of the Lord's mercy?
How did David feel about this matter?
What gracious promises has the Lord made to us regarding this question?

David's Sin Parabolically Disclosed and His Reaction

Who were the prophets of the Scriptures?
Who was Nathan and what was the occasion which brought him to David?
What was his apparent reason for speaking to the king by means of a parable?

Why was a parable an effective means in getting the truth before David?
 What was David's reaction when he heard the parable?
 Why did he manifest so strong an attitude toward the alleged wrongdoer?
 What lesson is there in this for us?
 What care should the Lord's people exercise in this respect?

"Thou Art the Man"

What effect did the disclosure that David was the man in question have on him?
 How do we know something about how he felt?
 What assurance did Nathan give David?
 What is the difference between the forgiveness of guilt and the removal of the consequences of sin?
 What were some of the consequences of David's sin and why was he required to suffer them?
 In what way did David despise Jehovah and his word?

Is it possible for us to do the same? Give reasons for your answer.

Confession and Forgiveness of Sin

What does it mean for one to confess his sin?
 What are many people prone to do when they become guilty of sin?
 Upon what condition has God promised to forgive sin?
 In what way did David express his feeling about his sin and the Lord's forgiveness?
 What effect does the cry for mercy usually have upon those who hear it?
 Why has the opening part of Psalm 32 been called "The Beatitude of Forgiveness"?
 What four terms did David use in describing his sin?
 What are the essential steps in the removal of sin from the life of one?
 What are some of the things implied in confessing one's sin?

Lesson XII—June 22, 1969

SOLOMON, ISRAEL'S THIRD KING

Lesson Text

1 Kings 1: 22-35

22 And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Na'-than the prophet came in.

23 And they told the king, saying, Behold, Na'-than the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

24 And Na'-than said, My Lord, O king, hast thou said, Ad-o-ni'-jah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

25 For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and failings and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and A-bi'-a-thar the priest; and, behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and say, *Long* live king Ad-o-ni'-jah.

26 But me, even me thy servant, and Za'-dok the priest, and Be-na'-iah the son of Je-hoi'-a-da, and thy servant Sol'-o-mon, hath he not called.

27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed unto thy servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

28 Then king David answered and said, Call to me Bath-she'-ba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

29 And the king sware, and said, As Je-ho'-vah liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

30 Verily as I sware unto thee by Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el, saying, Assuredly Sol'-o-mon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; verily so will I do this day.

31 Then Bath-she'-ba bowed with her face to the earth, and did obeisance to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

32 And king David said, Call to me Za'-dok the priest, and Na'-than the prophet, and Be-na'-iah the son of Je-hoi'-a-da. And they came before the king.

33 And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Sol'-o-mon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gi'-hon;

34 And let Za'-dok the priest and Na'-than the prophet anoint him there king over Is'-ra-el; and blow ye the trumpet, and say, *Long* live king Sol'-o-mon.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be prince over Is'-ra-el and over Ju'-dah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The *fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge.*”
(Prov. 1: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 45: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

June 16.	M.....	Solomon, Son of David (2 Sam. 12: 24)
June 17.	T.....	Solomon Chosen to Be King (1 Kings 1: 1-31)
June 18.	W.....	Effort to Supplant Solomon Fails (1 Kings 1: 32-53)
June 19.	T.....	Wisdom the Choice of Solomon (1 Kings 3: 4-15)
June 20.	F.....	The Wealth of Solomon (2 Chron. 1: 14-17)
June 21.	S.....	The Glory of Solomon (Matt. 6: 25-34)
June 22.	S.....	The Reign of Solomon (2 Chron. 1: 7-12)

TIME.—1015 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem and Gihon.

PERSONS.—David, Bath-sheba, Solomon, Adonijah, Nathan, and others

Introduction

The third ruler of the united kingdom of Israel was Solomon, one of the younger sons of David; and, sad to say, he was the last ruler of that kingdom. All of the first three kings of Israel, Saul, David, and Solomon, reigned for approximately forty years each; and, as we shall see in the following lesson, that is, the lesson for next week, it was Solomon who was directly responsible for the division which resulted in two kingdoms of God's people—Israel, the larger, and known as the Northern Kingdom; and Judah, the Southern Kingdom. It is doubtful if any king ever ascended his throne under more favorable circumstances, and who had brighter prospects for a successful reign, than Solomon. He had both the training and the example of his father to aid him; and his own attitude was such that Jehovah blessed him beyond that of any other king, either before or after him.

If we look at Solomon from the purely national and secular standpoint, he was without a doubt the greatest king Israel ever had, and the only one who could take his place beside the magnificent potentates of the ancient East. The glory which Solomon enjoyed, and the impression which he made upon his contemporaries, are recorded in some detail in the first ten chapters of First Kings. The splendor of this

young monarch was so great, that when Jesus wanted to portray the exquisite beauty of the lilies of the field, he said, “Yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (Matt. 6: 29.)

The reign of Solomon has been spoken of as the Augustan age of the Jewish nation, with this added peculiarity: he was not only its Augustus, but, according to tradition, its Aristotle also. A new world of thought was opened up to the people of Israel, when Solomon came to the throne. But not withstanding the fact that he was influenced by worthy and pious aspirations, especially at the beginning of his reign, it will have to be admitted that on the whole his policies were essentially selfish. His chief motives were the love of pleasure and power, of wealth, splendor, and fame; and the principal object before him was to promote his own interests, and strengthen and glorify the dynasty which his father David had founded. All of this required that he adopt measures which were obnoxious to many who were around him, and oppressive to the poor. His morning sun rose beautifully; but in the evening it sank amid the clouds and darkness of earthly exhalations, which made it difficult to say with certainty, how or where, if indeed at all, it would rise in the morning.

The Golden Text

“*The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge.*” The words just quoted are from one of the “Wisdom Books” of the Bible,

known as the Book of Proverbs. The term “proverb” is found frequently in the Scriptures, as may be seen by consulting any good con-
cor-

dance to the Bible. The original Hebrew word for proverb is *mashal*, and, as used with reference to Solomon, it means "sentences of ethical wisdom." (See *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver, and Briggs.) If one wants to trace the use of the term "proverb" through the Scriptures, he will find that it has various shades of meaning, such as brief terse sentences of popular sagacity (Ezek. 18: 2, 3; 1 Sam. 24: 13); as a byword (Deut. 28: 27); as a prophetic figurative discourse (Num. 23: 7, 18; Hab. 2: 6—the terms "proverb" and "parable," in the passages cited, are from the same Hebrew original); as a similitude or a parable (Ezek. 17: 1-10); as an ode (Num. 21: 27-30); and, as already noted, sentences of ethical wisdom. (Op. cit.) Similar uses of the term "proverb" are also found in the New Testament, but there are two different Greek words found in this part of the Bible, namely, (1) *parabolē* (Luke 4: 23; cf. King James Version); and *paroimia* (John 16: 25, King James Version; 2 Pet. 2: 22).

Solomon seems to have been the most prolific producer of proverbs, known among those whose names are mentioned in the Bible. "And he spake three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five." (1 Kings 4: 32.) Many of the proverbs which were coined by Solomon are found in the *Book of Proverbs*; but if one will take the time and make the effort to examine the contents of the book, it will not be difficult for him to see that evi-

dently some one, other than Solomon, compiled and edited it. The book contains five principal sections, namely, (1) The Value of Wisdom (1: 1-9: 18); (2) The First Collection of Solomon's Proverbs (10: 1-22: 16); (3) Some Practical Applications (22: 17-24: 34); (4) The Second Collection of Solomon's Proverbs (25: 1-29: 27); and (5) The Words of Agur, The Words of King Lemuel; and The Description of the Worthy Woman (30: 1-31: 31).

The words "knowledge" and "wisdom," strictly speaking, are not true synonyms; but they are apparently used interchangeably in the Book of Proverbs. The full sentence from which the words of the golden text are taken, reads as follows, "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction." The "fear of Jehovah" refers to the attitude which one must maintain toward him, that is, he must stand in awe of him, and reverence, that is, respect him for which and what he is. This is the starting point of knowledge and wisdom. It does not make any difference how much worldly information one may possess, he does not know that which is essential to his well being, if he does not have the proper attitude toward his Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. Jesus says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." (See Matt. 11: 25; cf. 1 Cor. 1: 18-25; 2: 6-13.)

The Text Explained

The Efforts of Bath-sheba and Nathan in Getting Solomon on the Throne

(1 Kings 1: 22-27)

And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet came in. And they told the king, saying, Behold, Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. And Nathan said, My Lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne? For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fainlings and sheep in abundance, and

hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and say, Long live king Adonijah. But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed unto thy servants who should sit on the throne of my Lord the king after him?

That which is said in the section of the lesson text just quoted can be understood, only in the light of the record which immediately precedes it. The first chapter of First Kings

opens with these words: "Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and cherish him; and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the borders of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And the damsel was very fair; and she cherished the king, and ministered to him; but the king knew her not." (1 Kings 1:1-4.)

Notwithstanding the fact that Abishag did not actually become the wife of the ailing king, she evidently was so regarded, as may be gathered from 1 Kings 2: 13-25. It has already pointed out in previous lessons of this quarter, that when any one claimed the wife of a former king, or endeavored to take her for himself, that he was by that act also claiming the throne for himself, or was taking an initial step in that direction.

Adonijah was apparently the oldest living son of David at the time of this lesson, and it is evident from verse six of the chapter from which the lesson text for today is taken, that David was quite fond of him; and apparently had permitted him to have his way regarding the things which pleased him. And so, Adonijah, feeling that the days of his father were about over, sought the counsel of some of the leading men of the kingdom, among them Joab and Abiathar in particular, and had had himself proclaimed as king. However, some of the principal men of the kingdom, who were very close to David, were not with Adonijah in his efforts to usurp the throne. One of this latter group was Nathan the prophet, who was very influential with both David and Bath-sheba, notwithstanding the part which he played in denouncing their sin in years gone by. And incidentally there is an important lesson just here which we should learn: One should never regard a person who rebukes him for his wrongdoing, and points him in the direction of reconciliation with God, as his enemy; but should think of him as a

friend indeed. But when Nathan learned what was being done by Adonijah, he realized the gravity of the situation, and he took immediate steps to do something about it, as may be seen in the following paragraph.

"Then Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David, our lord knoweth it not? Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my Lord, O king, swear unto thy handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words." (1 Kings 1: 11-14.)

Bath-sheba, too, seems to have realized the urgency of the situation, and she went immediately into the presence of the king, into the room where Abishag was ministering unto him; and while Nathan advised her to put the facts before her husband in the form of questions, it is worthy of notice that she stated every proposition as a matter of fact. And then she added, "And thou, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise it will come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his father, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders. (Read 1 Kings 1: 15-21.) Bath-sheba evidently felt that it was no time for diplomatic niceties; for, aside from the promise which David had made to her regarding the kingdom, her life and that of Solomon her son were at stake, as well as the fate of the kingdom itself. But with all of her urgency, Bath-sheba did not violate oriental etiquette.

It was at this point in the drama that Nathan came into the room where king David was, and confirmed the words which Bath-sheba had spoken unto her husband. It is clear from what she said to him, as well as from David's action and the

record in 1 Chron. 22: 6-13, that the promise that Solomon would inherit the throne of his father had indeed been made; and it is also clear that it was God's will that the throne be given to Solomon. But notwithstanding all of this, it was essential that Nathan and Bath-sheba do that which they could to bring the promise to pass. This principle has been illustrated time and again (cf. Esth. 4: 13-17); and it is just as applicable in our day, as it ever was. God has promised his blessings to us; but we must do our part, if we are to enjoy them.

David's Oath to Bath-sheba Reaffirmed

(1 Kings 1: 28-31)

Then king David answered and said, Call to me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. And the king sware and said, As Jehovah liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, verily as I sware unto thee by Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; verily so will I do this day. Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did obeisance to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

The entire narrative which we are now considering shows that the customary eastern protocol was observed, to a large extent, even among the members of David's own household; and while Bath-sheba, as already noted, did not employ the particular form of language which was suggested to her by Nathan, she did, however, conform to the custom which apparently required that she leave the room when the prophet came in.

It was pointed out above that it is clear from David's reaction to the words of Bath-sheba, that he had indeed made the promise to her, and which was confirmed by an oath, that Solomon would inherit the throne; but it is well to note that this was the first time in Hebrew history, that the reigning monarch had arranged for his successor to receive the appointment as king. Moses had warned, before Israel entered the land of Canaan, that Jehovah would reserve the right to him-

self to nominate the ruler of his people. (See Deut. 17: 14, 15.) It is, of course, a well known historical fact, that God did choose both Saul and David; and now his will was being carried out, as we have already seen, in the case of Solomon.

But beginning with David a new feature entered the picture, namely, all kings from then onward would be of the family of David; and it would be natural to suppose, if nothing more was said regarding the question, that the oldest living son of the reigning king would inherit the throne. This was probably one of the principal motives which moved Adonijah to act as he did; but notwithstanding the fact that the kingdom itself had been vouchsafed to the house of David, Jehovah still claimed the right to say which son would succeed his father as king. "But the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, . . . Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon | that is, Peaceful, marginal note I, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever." (1 Chron. 22: 8-10.) It was probably from this revelation that David was moved to promise Bath-sheba that her son Solomon should succeed his father as king.

After receiving the king's word, again confirmed with an oath, that the previous oath regarding Solomon would be respected, Bath-sheba, in keeping with the custom of the court, demonstrated her affection for her husband; and while she no doubt would be happy to see her son on the throne of Israel, she would also be happy to have her husband continue as king, as long as Jehovah saw fit to spare him. This appears to have been in sharp contrast with Adonijah's attitude; for it is fair to assume that he endeavored to establish himself upon the throne as early as possible. This reminds us of the manner of some, even in our day, who seem to try to hurry the passing of their parents, or other benefactors, so that they themselves

may enjoy the fruits of their labors. But, as quaint old Matthew Henry notes, we should earnestly desire the prolonging of useful lives, however it may be the postponing of any advantages of our own.

Solomon Anointed King

(1 Kings 1: 32-35)

And king David said, Call to me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel; and blow ye the trumpet, and say, Long live king Solomon. Then ye shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be prince over Israel and over Judah.

Zadok and Nathan may be thought of as the religious or ecclesiastical leaders in the court of David, while Benaiah was probably the commander of a group, referred to as the servants of the king, probably the king's guard. The three men referred to here had remained loyal to David through many troublesome times; and he knew that they could be trusted to carry out his orders regarding Solomon. It is well, also, to note the minute directions which David gave concerning Solomon's ascension to the throne.

(1) The men in charge were to have him ride upon his father's mule, which no one could do in the absence of royal premission, without forfeiting his life; and since the king had commanded this, it was sufficient evidence to show to the people that David had appointed this son to be his successor. It should also be noted that the mule, rather than the horse, was the royal mount of kings. The horse was often the symbol of war, while the mule usually symbolized peace. (Cf. Matt. 21: ff.)

(2) Solomon was to be taken to Gihon for the anointing ceremonies. This Gihon was probably a large spring or public watering place, in or near the city of Jerusalem; and that fact would insure a large crowd

of people to witness the anointing ceremonies. If the Gihon in question is the same as the one the traveler sees in the environs of Jerusalem, then it is the one whose waters Hezekiah diverted, by means of a tunnel, to serve the growing needs of an expanding population of Jerusalem, during his prosperous reign. At the two extremes of the tunnel are the spring of Gihon and the pool of Siloam.

(3) The heir to the throne of David was to be anointed before the people who would be assembled at Gihon, by the religious leaders, and personal friends and advisors of the king himself. This would lend a force to the action which could not be easily set aside. (4) The trumpet was then to be blown, to call attention to the proclamation, "Long live king Solomon." This, of course, would give the incident the widest kind of publicity.

(5) Following the anointing and the attendant ceremonies, Solomon was to lead the procession to the throne itself, take his seat upon it, as a symbol that he was, then and there, assuming the reigns of government; and was about to administer justice and judgment to the people. And that Solomon did just that may be seen from the remainder of the first chapter of First Kings, the chapter from which the text for this lesson is taken.

The injunctions which David issued were obeyed to the letter, with the result that popular enthusiasm for the new king was in evidence on every hand. The people who were with Adonijah heard the great shouts of rejoicing, and their meeting quickly came to an end, as the following statement clearly shows: "And all the guests of Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon; and he arose, and went, and caught hold of the horns of the altar." (1 Kings 1: 49, 50.) To take hold of the horns of the altar was to seek an asylum in the sanctuary of the tabernacle.

Adonijah made no effort whatsoever to contest his alleged right to the throne, but said, after he took hold of the horns of the altar, "Let king Solomon swear unto me first that he will not slay his servant with the sword." (Verse 51.) The

king, however, very wisely declined to bind himself by any such oath, but said simply, "If he shall show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and thy brought him down from the altar. And he came and did obedience to king Solomon; and Solomon said unto him, Go to thy house." (See 1 Kings 1: 52, 53.) This apparently was the king's first official act upon the throne; and it was one of justice seasoned with mercy.

It is thought by many Bible students that David probably composed the Seventy-second Psalm, in com-

memoration of the great event which we have been considering; while others, judging by the title it bears in our versions of the Scriptures, are of the opinion that inasmuch as David was nearing the end of his life here upon the earth, and was in all probability too weak for such a task, that Solomon put into poetic form the expressions which his father voiced: so that the thoughts were those of David, while the actual writing was that of Solomon. But in whatever manner the psalm came into being, it commemorates the reign of Solomon, but rises to a higher note, and sings of the glorious reign of the Messiah himself.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

What position did Solomon occupy, with reference to the rulers, in the kingdom of Israel?

What situation did he create and for which he became responsible?

Under what circumstances did he ascend the throne of Israel?

Tell something of the nature of his reign.

The Golden Text

From what part of the Scriptures do the words of the golden text come?

What is a "proverb" and in what way is it related to a parable?

Discuss the various types of proverbs found in the Bible.

What is said of Solomon in connection with proverbs and what was his relation to the Book of Proverbs?

What are the basic meanings of knowledge and wisdom?

The Efforts of Bath-sheba and Nathan in Getting Solomon on the Throne

What are the historical facts which immediately precede this section of the lesson text?

In what evident relationship with David was Abishag regarded by the people?

Why did Adonijah apparently think that he had a right to the throne?

Who took the lead in preventing his becoming king?

What advice did Nathan give to Bath-sheba?

What were evidently the feelings of the latter regarding the matter and what did she do?

What was Nathan's part in the drama?

How do we know that David had actually promised the throne to Solomon and why?

What principle was brought to light here and in what manner has it been illustrated?

David's Oath to Bath-sheba Reaffirmed

What was apparent in the family of David regarding eastern protocol?

What "first" in Hebrew history is revealed in this lesson?

What prerogative with reference to the kings of Israel did Jehovah reserve for himself?

Show that this held true throughout the nation's history up to this point.

What new feature entered into the picture with the events of this lesson?

What was the reaction of Bath-sheba when David reaffirmed his oath regarding Solomon?

What important lesson should we learn from these circumstances?

Solomon Anointed King

Who were Zadok and Nathan with reference to the court of David? Also Benaiah?

What specific instruction did David give his trusted friends and advisors at this point?

Why was Solomon caused to ride a mule instead of a horse?

Where was the anointing ceremonies to take place and what and where was Gihon?

What impression would the anointing of Solomon under the circumstances named have on the people?

What took place immediately following the anointing ceremonies?

What was the reaction of Adonijah and in what way was he treated by the new king?

Lesson XIII—June 29, 1969

SOLOMON'S SIN AND FALL

Lesson Text

1 Kings 11: 4-13

4 For it came to pass, when Sol'-o-mon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with Je-ho'-vah his God, as was the heart of David his father.

5 For Sol'-o-mon went after Ash'-to-reth the goddess of the Si-do'-ni-ans, and after Mil'-com the abomination of the Am'-mon-ites.

6 And Sol'-o-mon did that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'-vah, and went not fully after Je-ho'-vah, as did David his father.

7 Then did Sol'-o-mon build a high place for Che'-mash the abomination of Mo'-ab, in the mount that is before Je-ru'-sa-lem, and for Mo'-lech the abomination of the children of Am'-mon.

8 And so did he for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

9 And Je-ho'-vah was angry with

Sol'-o-mon, because his heart was turned away from Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el, who had appeared unto him twice.

10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he kept not that which Je-ho'-vah commanded.

11 Wherefore Je-ho'-vah said unto Sol'-o-mon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Je-ru'-sa-lem's sake which I have chosen.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* (1 Cor. 10: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Kings 10: 1-13.

Daily Bible Readings

June 23. M.....	Solomon's Corrupt Life (1 Kings 11: 1-3)
June 24. T.....	Solomon's Folly in Later Life (1 Kings 11: 4-8)
June 25. W.....	"Jehovah Was Angry with Solomon" (1 Kings 11: 9-13)
June 26. T.....	Effect of Sin (Isa. 59: 1, 2)
June 27. F.....	Words of Warning (Rom. 11: 22; 1 Cor. 10: 12)
June 28. S.....	David's Warning to Solomon (1 Chron. 28: 9)
June 29. S.....	Solomon's Death (1 Kings 11: 41-43)

TIME.—984 B.C. ff

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Solomon, and his wives.

Introduction

After Solomon was firmly established upon the throne of his father David, he went to Gibeon, about five miles northwest of the capital city of Jerusalem, to sacrifice; and it was there that Jehovah made the first of three significant appearances to him. Jehovah asked Solomon, at this first appearance, what he would like for God to give him. And the young king, with the heart and attitude of a trusting child, requested wisdom, so that he could be a righ-

teous and successful ruler of the people of the Lord; and, as a result of that wonderful gift which he received from his heavenly Father, he became the wisest king who ever lived. (See 1 Kings 3: 4-15; 4: 29-34.) This incident, coming as it did at the very threshold of his reign, was perhaps the greatest single incident in his life, not excepting the opening and dedication of the temple. High thoughts surged through Solomon's mind, which both in-

spired and humbled him. But, sad to say, the heavenly light, which was his on the occasion just referred to, afterwards faded within him, and the glory of his great resolution died within his soul.

Solomon's next great move was to build the temple of the worship of Jehovah, a work which had been divinely assigned to him, after his father David had been denied that privilege. (See 1 Chron. 22: 6ff; 28: 1ff.) This was a tremendous undertaking; and seven years were required to finish it. (See 1 Kings, 6: 7.) Solomon's address to the people, and his prayer to Jehovah, at the dedication of the temple, reveal something of the faith which was in his heart at that time. Following these services, Jehovah appeared to Solomon a second time, and assured him that both his prayer and the temple were acceptable to him, but Jehovah warned the king of what would happen to him, if the latter failed to keep all the commandments which had been given to him. (Read 1 Kings 8: 1-9: 9.) The visit of the queen of Sheba, along with the impression which Solomon made upon her, are graphically set forth in 1 Kings 10: 1-13; cf. Matt. 12: 42.)

The Golden Text

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Those who study this lesson can do no better, at this time, than to read the context in which the words just quoted are found, namely, "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as

But as one continues to read the history of king Solomon, it will have to be admitted that it was a strange and startling step from Solomon, the wise temple builder, to Solomon, the sensual devotee of luxury and pleasure, and filling Jerusalem and its environs with shrines for the worship of heathen gods; but that is exactly what happened, as we shall see in the study now under way. While it is doubtful if Solomon actually wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes himself; but it is very evident that whoever wrote the book had a clear understanding of the life and philosophy of Solomon, and made it plain that the king was aware of his own folly. And so, as we enter into this phase of our study, we naturally think of that which Solomon could have been; but the words of the inspired record reveal something of the gathering storm. It was at the time of our lesson for today that Jehovah appeared to Solomon the third time, and pronounced his doom. How can we account for this great change in the life of Solomon? The answer to this question, and the lessons involved, is the task which is now before us, both in the golden text and the principal scriptural narrative upon which the lesson is based.

some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 1-13.)

Any thoughtful observer today will have no difficulty in seeing that the conditions which Paul mentions are also present among professed

followers of Christ in this age of the world. Indifference, moral and spiritual laxity, and general unfaithfulness, are indeed, prevalent to an alarming degree. The apostle, in the passage just quoted, shows in detail how apostasy works; and he says that the things which he mentions were written for our admonition. David, in giving his charge concerning the building of the temple, said to Solomon, "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." (1 Chron. 28: 9; cf. 1 Sam. 16: 7; Heb. 4: 12, 13.)

It is natural, for those who are familiar with the Bible, to think of Paul's admonition to his son in the gospel, Timothy, after reading David's words to Solomon, quoted above. Both David and Paul were on the eve of leaving their sons in a wicked world, and both were deeply

interested in seeing that the young men were themselves faithful to God, but also that they would influence, for the better, the lives of others about them. Paul's words to Timothy are, "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry." (2 Tim. 4: 1-5.) The apostle Paul assured the Corinthian Christians that they would have the help of the Lord, in overcoming the evil one, if only they would do their best to live for him; and all of this means that no one should ever feel that he no longer needs to watch for his soul.

The Text Explained

Solomon's Incredible Folly

(1 Kings 11: 4-8)

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and went not fully after Jehovah, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so did he for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

The significance of this section of the lesson text can be understood, only in the light of the preceding words of the chapter from which it is taken. "Now king Solomon loved many foreign women, together with

the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which Jehovah said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go among them, neither shall they come among you; for surely they will turn away your heart after other gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart."

If one will look again at the history of Solomon, as found in the Scriptures, he will be impressed with the fact that nothing but good, except for the implications in the closing part of chapter 10, has been recorded up to this point; but beginning with chapter 11, the lustre of his goodness and greatness is practically eclipsed by that which follows. And in order for us to appreciate the great contrast between the two phases of Solomon's life, the last two paragraphs of chapter 10 are hereby quoted: "So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the

earth in riches and in wisdom. And all the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

"And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore-trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; and the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means." (1 Kings 10: 23-29.)

If one will take the time to read Deut. 17: 14-20, he will see that Moses had given specific instruction to guide the king, and that he was expected to make a copy of that law before him at all times; but when one reads the closing paragraphs of 1 Kings 10, and the first three verses of chapter 11, it will be easy for him to see that Solomon violated, to the letter, every prohibition which Moses gave in the passages just cited. The extraordinary gift of wisdom which Solomon possessed was not sufficient to keep him from falling into grievous and fatal sins. It is doubtful if a fairer promise of true greatness, or a more beautiful picture of the piety of youth, has ever been seen, than that which was exhibited by Solomon at the beginning of his reign. And, by the same token, there is perhaps no sadder, more humiliating, or awful spectacle, which can be imagined, than the besotted apostasy of that king's old age. His fall is traced to his love of "many foreign women," including the daughter of Pharaoh, who was probably his favorite wife, and the heroine of *The Song of Solomon*. (Cf. Song of Sol. 6: 8, 9.)

According to the passage just cited, the wives of Solomon were "queens," of whom he had sixty, at the time of the writing of that book, and eighty concubines. This, of course, indicates that his harem was gradually increased to the number given in 1 Kings 11. All of Solomon's wives appear to have been from royal families. The "concubines" appear to have been secondary wives, such as Hagar, in her relation to Abraham and Sarah. Nehemiah, apparently the last historical record of the Old Testament period, has this comment regarding Solomon and his wives: "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, and he was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did foreign women cause to sin." (Read Neh. 13: 23-27.)

The selection of the lesson text now under consideration is the historical account of the sin of Solomon to which Nehemiah referred, in the passage just cited. The king, instead of exerting an influence for good upon the world about him, by dedicating himself to the cause of the Lord, Solomon allowed himself to be brought under the influence the world, and accepted all the homage which it brought to him. He surrounded himself with influences which demoralized, pulled to pieces, and brought to decay the spiritual qualities which he possessed, in his efforts to become worldly great; and what Solomon did, countless thousands of others, some of the professed followers of Christ, have done.

And not only did Solomon surround himself with worldly influences in general, he apparently married every idolatrous woman whom he desired. But instead of winning them to the religion of Jehovah, and to the service of the temple which he himself had builded for the glory of God, the foreign women won king Solomon to their religion, and even led him to build places of worship for their gods. Jehovah expressly told his people not to intermarry with the heathen nations about them, but Solomon's love for those foreign

women was stronger than his love for Jehovah.

But Solomon is not the only person who made the fatal mistake of entering into a mixed marriage relationship. It is an undeniable fact that there is, even among otherwise informed Christians, a lack of settled convictions on the subject of mixed marriages. It appears that many such people think that those who speak against such unions have no scriptural authority, upon which to base their teaching, and that the whole matter is left to the individual desire. Consequently, so far as the Bible is concerned, there is general indifference regarding the question; but, contrary to general opinion, the Bible clearly teaches that Jehovah has always, in every age of the world, had a uniform law on the subject of mixed marriages. This law is not based on statutes, arbitrarily imposed, but upon the fundamental principles of the kingdom of heaven.

We do not need any clearer example, to show us the outcome of marriages where there is no accord in the deeper things of life, nor a common faith, than that which our lesson for today furnishes. The foreign wives which Solomon brought to his palace, had no sympathy for Israel's faith in Jehovah; and they did not hesitate therefore to have their husband build altars to their gods, for the purpose of offering incense unto them. Alexander Macclaren, in commenting on this, says, "May we not venture to see a warning here against marriages in which there is not unity in the deepest things, and a common faith? 'When you run in double harness, take a good look at the other horse.' If a young Christian man or woman enters on such a union with one who is not a Christian, it is a great deal more probable that, in the end, there will be two unbelievers than that there will be two Christians."

Jehovah's Reaction to Solomon's Sin

(1 Kings 11: 9, 10)

And Jehovah was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept

not that which Jehovah commanded.

The "anger" of Jehovah toward his people indicates his intense displeasure. It means that he is totally opposed that which his creature is doing, or has done. (Read Psalm 7: 11-13.) Peter says, "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil." (1 Pet. 3: 12.) The contrast is between the righteous and the evil. He looks with favor upon them that obey him, and listens to their prayers; but his face reveals his stern displeasure with those who reject his ways. Righteous indignation is a trait of the God of the Bible.

The sense in which Peter uses the term "face," in the passage just quoted, is seen in the gathering glooms of both life and death. Men may try to dismiss the idea, so long as they are in good health; but when the hour of death is upon them, the picture quickly changes. A man may be hardened in sin, as he walks through life, and he may cry, Where is the Lord? in impious defiance of presumptuous scorn; but let death come upon him, and the face of the Lord will be clearly seen. The whole scroll of life unrolls before him; and every thought and experience stands out with startling vividness. There is no mist and confusion; and he fully realizes that he is before God, with absolutely no chance to get right with him. (Cf. Luke 16: 19-31.) The face of God flashes out over his entire life, as his soul passes on to the realities of his destiny. In the words of another, the "vain show" vanishes, and the illusion is for ever ended. Edward Young, in *Night Thoughts*, expresses the matter in these words:

A death-bed's a detector of the heart:

Truth is deposited with man's last hour,

An honest hour and faithful to her trust;

Men may live like fools, but fools they cannot die.

Solomon's Disastrous End

(1 Kings 11: 11-13)

Wherefore Jehovah said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I

have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen..

The fulfillment of this statement regarding the rending of the kingdom from the house of David, and the setting up of two kingdoms instead of one, is set forth in the following chapter; and the student will be richly rewarded if he will read that chapter, in connection with this lesson. It is easy to see that the division of the Lord's people came as a direct result of the sins of Solomon, the unmistakable fruit of his sensual life. No one has ever been successful in defying the inexorable law of the harvest. (Cf. Gal. 6: 7, 8.) Carnality will eat its way into, and destroy, character, as surely as an unquenched fire will destroy a building, and leave it a heap of charred debris. The wail of Lord Byron could well have been the wail of king Solomon, and for the same reason,

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

Adam Clarke, in speaking of Solomon's sins, says, "Had not this man's delinquency been strongly marked by the divine disapprobation, it would have had a fatal effect on the morals of mankind. Vice is *vice*, no matter who commits it. And God is as much displeased with sin in Solomon as he can be with it

in the most profligate, *uneducated* wretch. And although God sees the same sin in *precisely the same degree of moral turpitude* as to the act itself, yet there may be *circumstances* which greatly aggravate the offence, and subject the offender to greater punishment. . . . Solomon deserved more punishment for his worship of Ashoreth than any of the Sidonians did, though they performed precisely the same acts. The Sidonians had never known the true God; Solomon had been fully acquainted with him." (Cf. Luke 12: 47, 48.)

The closing years of Solomon bore grim testimony to the fact that it is possible for a man to fall from God's favor, after a season of fellowship with him. (Cf. 1 Cor. 9: 27.) The question naturally arises, Did the sun go down upon the sins of Solomon, never to rise again? There are two significant facts which seem to indicate that it did, namely, (1) the king showed no signs of penitence, when he was rebuked; and (2) the shrines which he erected for heathen gods were allowed to remain. (See 2 Kings 23: 13.) So far as we know, the light of Solomon was swallowed up in total darkness. For him there was no evening star, but only sadness of farewell and the mournful moaning of the bar, when he put out to sea.

Solomon and Paul were about the same age when their earthly careers ended; but what a difference between their twilight experiences! Solomon spent his final days in a palace, where the air was filled with incense which had been offered to alien gods. Paul's last abiding place was a dark dungeon, but it was fragrant with the Divine Presence. It would be difficult to find two statements which indicate a wider difference in the closing experiences of two men, than 1 Kings 11: 4, and 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What happened to Solomon when God made the first of three significant appearances to him?
What was his next great move?
What did Jehovah say to him at the time of the second appearance?

What strange and startling step did the king take as his reign continued?

The Golden Text

In what context did the author of the words of the golden text write them?
What relevancy does his message have for our day?
What is the only successful way to avoid apostasy?
In what way did David and Paul en-

- deavor to keep their sons in the right way?
 What help may the faithful children of God count on, while fighting the battles of life?
 Why should every responsible person continuously watch in behalf of his soul?

Solomon's Incredible Folly

What is essential in order to understand the section of the lesson text now before us?

In what way did Solomon disregard the instruction which Jehovah had given his people?

What other events in the life of Solomon almost brought the good of his former life into total eclipse?

How can we account for the king's incredible folly?

What specific instruction did Jehovah give to serve as guide-lines for the king?

How did Solomon's record appear in the light of that document?

Discuss the contrast between the earlier and later years in the life of that king.

What light do the Books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon throw upon his life?

What kind of women, generally speaking, did Solomon marry?

What was the difference between a "wife" and a "concubine"?

What mistake did Solomon make with reference to the world about him?

What comment did the writer of Nehemiah make regarding the downfall of Solomon?

Why is there such a woeful lack of settled conviction among the Lord's people on the subject of mixed marriages?

What does the Bible contain with reference to the question? Give reason for your answer.

What generally happens when a Christian marries a non-Christian? Why?

Jehovah's Reaction to Solomon's Sin

What is meant by the "anger" of Jehovah?

In what way does the New Testament refer to this subject?

When will all men be fully aware of God's anger?

Solomon's Disastrous End

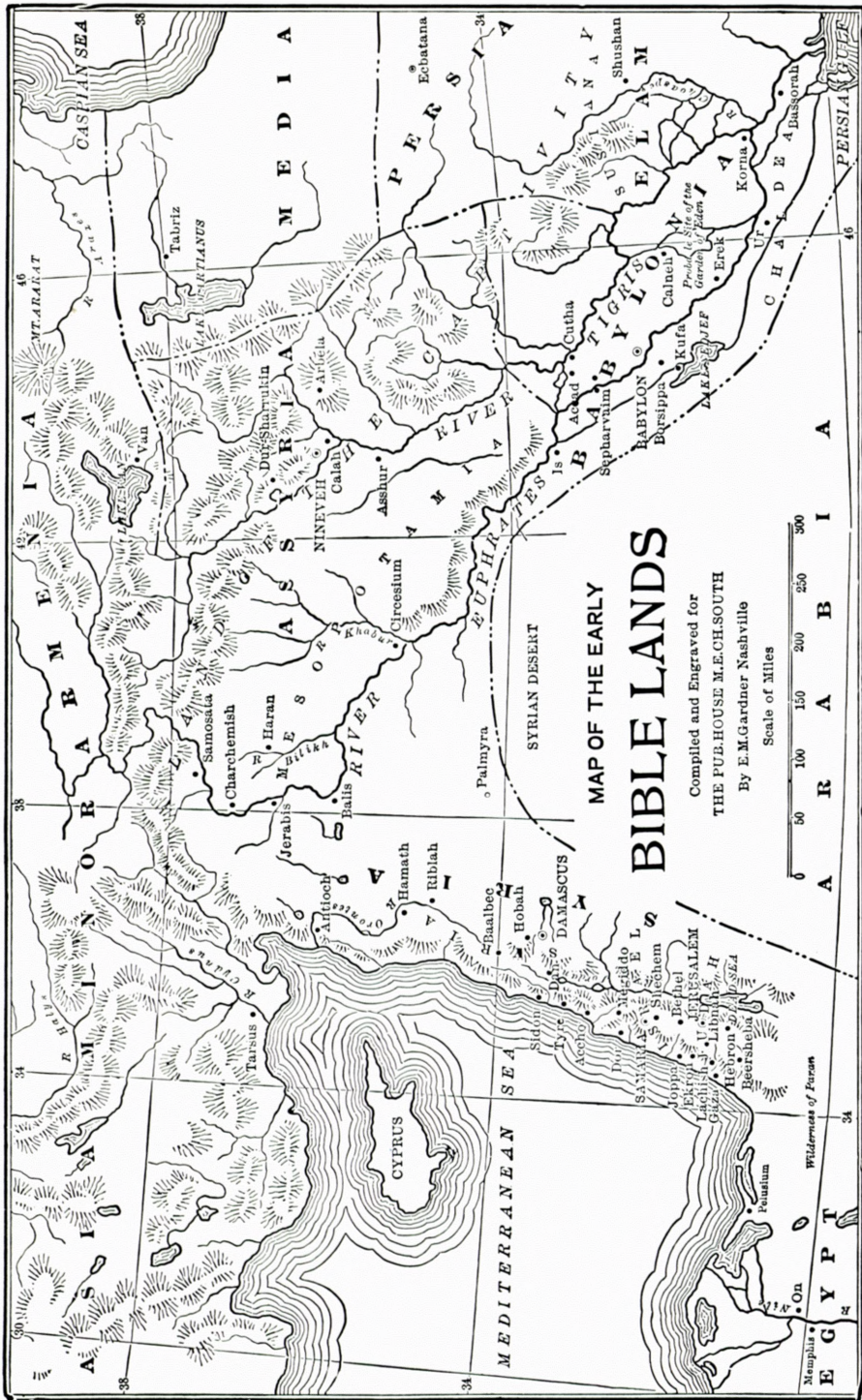
What did Jehovah say that he would do regarding the kingdom over which Solomon ruled?

Who was directly responsible for all of this? Give reason for your answer.

What apparently was the reason for registering God's attitude toward Solomon's sin?

What great truth do the closing years of Solomon illustrate?

Discuss the difference in the closing statements regarding the ends of Solomon and Paul.



MAP OF THE EARLY

BIBLE LANDS

Completed and Engraved for
 THE PUB-HOUSE M.E.C.H.SOUTH
 By E.M.Gardner Nashville

Scale of Miles



Wilderness of Paran

Memphis On

E G Y P T

A R A B I A

46

34

34

38

38

34

38

34

38

34

38

34

THIRD QUARTER GREAT THEMES OF THE BIBLE

(First half of six months' course)

AIM.—To inform ourselves in some of the most vital themes of the scriptures and to imbibe the principles thereof in order to the transformation of our lives.

Lesson I—July 6, 1969

OUR CREATOR—GOD

Lesson Text

Gen. 1: 1-5, 26-31; 2: 1-3

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over

the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food:

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so.

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

1 And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."* (Psalm 139: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 6: 24-34

Daily Bible Readings

June	30. M.....	God, Our Creator (Gen. 1: 26-28)
July	1. T.....	God, Creator of the Heavens and Earth (Gen. 1: 1-3)
July	2. W.....	God, Creator of the Heavens (Isa. 42: 1-5)
July	3. T.....	God, Maker of the Earth (Isa. 45: 10-12)
July	4. F.....	God Should Be Remembered (Eccles. 12: 1-14)
July	5. S.....	God, a Faithful Creator (1 Pet. 4: 12-19)
July	6. S.....	God Created All by Christ (Col. 1: 9-17)

TIME.—From the “beginning” to A.M. 1 (A.M.=the first year of our world).

PLACE.—Presumably in or near the location of the garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—Jehovah and the man he created.

Introduction

That God has revealed himself in the Bible, is a fact accepted by all who believe that that Book is of divine origin. We learn from such scriptures as Psalm 19: 1 and Romans 1: 20 that he has made himself known through the material creation; but we should always keep in mind that no one can learn the identity of God from nature: we only learn from that source that there must have been a Creator. The Bible and the Bible alone tells us who the Creator is. Every human being who realizes his own helplessness, as well as the helplessness of mankind in general, should be anxious to learn as much about God as possible; and with that thought in mind, let us consider some of the things which the Bible says about God.

As one endeavors to learn that which the Bible says about God, he will see that he appears in the Inspired Record in a three-fold relationship, namely, that of Creator, Lawgiver, and Redeemer. It will also be noted that each of the three relationships just mentioned involves and makes known many of his excellencies; but in each of the major categories, there are three characteristics which are most conspicuous: As Creator, there is wisdom, power, and goodness; as Lawgiver, there is justice, truth, and holiness; and as Redeemer, there is

mercy, condescension, and love, and it should be further observed that in each and in all of these attributes he is infinite, immutable, and eternal.

One of the clearest statements of the Bible regarding the creatorship of God, is the one which Paul made in his address to the philosophers in Athens. His words are: “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. 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 life to all, and breath, and all things; 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.”
(Acts 17: 22b-28.)

The Golden Text

“I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” The psalm from which this text is taken, was written by David, and it has been called “the crown of all the psalms.” It sets forth that which Theology calls “the doctrine of the Divine Omniscience.” There is, perhaps, no clearer statement, nor a greater one, of Jehovah’s intimate knowledge of man, than the one which is found in the first part of the psalm, from which the golden text is taken, namely, “O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting

and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art

there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, and the light about me shall be night; even the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou didst form my inward parts: thou didst **cover** me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: wonderful are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." (Psalm 139: 1-14.)

If we will continuously think of God as our Maker, then we, like Paul and David, will have a higher conception of both Jehovah and ourselves. God's creative works reached their climax in the making of man. Henry Giles thinks' that "man is greater than a world—than systems of worlds; there is more mystery in the union of soul with the body, than in the creation of a universe." But be that as it may, we know that Jesus says that the life of man is worth more than the world. "For what shall a man be

profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matt. 16: 26.) Carlyle, in speaking of man, says, "He is of the earth, but his thoughts are with the stars. Mean and petty his wants and desires; yet they serve a soul exalted with grand, glorious aims,—with immortal longings,—with thoughts which sweep the heavens, and wander through eternity. A pigmy standing on the outward crest of this small planet, his far-reaching spirit stretches outward to the infinite, and there alone finds rest."

David, in another psalm, says, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than God, and crowned him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8: 4-9.)

The Text Explained

Creation, Destruction, and Renovation

(Gen. 1: 1-5)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

The first chapter of Genesis, so far as the earth itself is concerned, contains a remarkable revelation. It tells of the earth's creation, along with that of the heavens, which evidently refers to what we know as the visible sky and the heavenly bodies, the earth's destruction, and the earth's reconstruction. It should be carefully noted that nothing is

said about the heavens' becoming waste and void, but only the earth. If one believes that which is said in verse one, of the passage now under consideration, he will have no trouble understanding the origin of the heavens and the earth, that is, he will understand that they came into being as the result of the creative power of Jehovah.

The "beginning" does not refer to the beginning of God, for he had no beginning; but rather to the beginning of the heavens and the earth, most utterly impossible for any one to know how far back into the distant past, as only human beings can conceive of the matter, the beginning was; but we should be content with the affirmation that it was then that Jehovah created the heavens and the earth. And when we read such passages as Psalm 33: 6, 9 and Hebrews 11: 3, it is fair to assume that God spoke the heavens and earth into existence instantaneously; and that they had no pre-

vious existence in any form whatsoever. The two passages just referred to, in the order named, read as follows: "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear."

Later on in the history of the world, we learn that God's word was personified, took on a body of flesh; and appeared in history as Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This accounts for The New Testament's teaching that all things were created by the Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God! The

same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us-(and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1: 1-3, 14; cf. Heb. 10: 5.) The "beginning" here, as in Genesis 1: 1, refers to the beginning of the material universe. There is no article before beginning in either instance. "For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him." (Col. 1: 16.)

When one reads Job 38: 4-7 and Isaiah 45: 18, it is, in the light of those scriptures, impossible for one to think that the original creation was anything but perfect. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who stretched the line upon it? Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof, When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" "For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and

created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited: I am Jehovah; and there is none else." The term "waste," in the passage just quoted, is identical with the word in Genesis 1:2; and this, of course, clearly implies that the earth was not "waste and void" when it was first created. The first verse of Genesis therefore denotes an era, which extended, expressed in human language, from the creation of the heavens and the earth, to the latter's destruction.

Verse 2 also is a statement, complete within itself, and indicates the period, humanly speaking, from the collapse of the earth, to the beginning of the reconstruction of the earth, as a place suitable for the habitation of the human race. In the expression, "And the earth *was* waste and void," the verb "*was*" could, according to Hebrew scholars, just as well have been translated "*became*." If that is true, then the first part of verse 2 would read as follows: "And the earth became waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The Aramaic rendering of the passage is, "And the earth had become ruined and uninhabited." And so, in keeping with the idea just expressed, the earth, sometime between its original creation and the beginning of time, as we know it, collapsed and "*became* waste and void," totally unfit therefore for the race which Jehovah was about to create. It is possible that this collapse is referred to in Job 9: 5-7.

The Spirit of God, in the closing part of verse 2, is represented as moving, or brooding (see marginal note), upon the face of the waters. The Spirit of God, always impersonal in the Old Testament, is his life principle and the divine energy by which he always carries on his diverse activities. (Cf. Job 26: 13; Psalm 104: 30; Luke 1: 34, 35.) In the last passage cited, the *Holy*

Spirit and the power of the Most High are one and the same, that is, the two expressions are parts of a parallelism. When Jehovah came to perfect his plan for saving the lost, he personified his Word, as we have already seen, and he appeared in history as Jesus Christ; and in a similar manner, he "personified his Spirit who, in the New Testament, is referred to frequently as the Holy

Spirit, whose mission is to bring to fulfillment, in human experience, the whole meaning of Jesus Christ as God's Son and the Saviour of the race. God alone is represented as a Person in the Old Testament; but in the New Testament the three Persons in the Trinity are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

"God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!"

The historic period, as we know time, begins with verse 3. If one will keep in mind the analysis of the first chapter of Genesis, it will be much easier for him to get the lesson which the inspired writer has for his readers. (1) The creation of the heavens and the earth in the beginning, verse 1; (2) the collapse and consequent chaotic condition of the earth, verse 2; and (3) the beginning of the renovation of the earth, verse 3. The entire first chapter of Genesis, beginning with verse 3, is a record of the restoration of the earth, along with the creation of its inhabitants, for which and for whom it was made.

The original word for "created" in verse 1 does not occur in the chapter again, until verse 21; there is an entirely different original word to describe that which was done in the intervening verses. The first of these Hebrew words, *bara*, means to create or make something which had no previous existence; while the second term, *asah*, has reference to renovation or reconstruction. The sun, moon, and stars, for example, were created (*bara*) in the beginning; but after the collapse of the earth, their relationship to the earth had to be restored (*asah*): and it was in this sense that God made (*asah*) the sun, moon, and stars. (See Gen. 1: 14-19.) These heavenly bodies had continued from the beginning; but they had not been related to the earth, as they now are, during the period of the earth's collapse. But inasmuch as the same original word for "create" (*bara*) is found in verse 21ff., the implication is that animal life and man had not previously existed.

The earth, in its chaotic condition, was completely covered with darkness; and Jehovah's first act in the work of restoring the earth, was that of commanding light to come upon the scene, which is described

as being good. He then divided the light from the darkness, and called them Day and Night, respectively. The manner in which evening and morning are referred to implies that time, as we know it, was born at high noon.

The Creation of Man and His Dominion

(Gen. 1: 26-31)

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said. Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for food: and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The great work of reconstructing the earth, and making it a suitable place for a home for the human race, is set forth in the greater part of the first chapter of Genesis. The original language which was employed in recording this narrative clearly shows the difference between that which was created outright, and that which was renovated or restored. And furthermore, there is no reason for thinking that the six days of the first chapter of Genesis are anything but twenty-four hour days, as we understand that expression. Sidney Collett has observed that "throughout the whole of Scripture the word day is never

used to represent a lengthened period when a numeral is connected with it." Thus, one day, three days, four days, one hundred and fifty days, always means a twenty-four hour day, or a fraction thereof.

The term "God," in Gen. 1: 1, 26, as indeed throughout the entire first chapter of Genesis, is a translation of the Hebrew *Elohim*, the plural of *Eloah*, which may be, in the opinion of some scholars, an augmented form of *El*, the general Hebrew name for deity, whether the true God of the Bible, or the false gods of the land. In verses 1 and 26, as already noted, the word "God" is plural, but in both instances the verb is singular. Thus, God (plural) created (singular); God (plural) said, Let us (plural) make (singular) man. This type of sentence structure is certainly not usual, and calls for some kind of explanation. Many Bible students are of the opinion that the use of a plural subject, with a singular verb, indicates plenitude of might and unlimited greatness; or, to state the same thing in another way, in Jehovah are united all the powers of eternity and infinity, which may be spoken of as a "plural of majesty." Jehovah is one (cf. Deut. 6: 4; Mark 12: 29), and is so regarded throughout the Old Testament period; but when he perfected and put into operation the gospel plan of redemption, he personified his Word and his Spirit, and revealed himself as God in three Persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, when Jehovah said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," he apparently had reference to the plurality of his own unlimited greatness, which later, as already noted, took the form of three Personalities.

Man has been given dominion over the created universe, and was told to subdue it, that is, discover its secrets and rule over it. This certainly means that man should learn all the facts he can concerning it (cf. Job 12: 7-12); but he should always remember that both he and all that is in the earth were created by Jehovah, and that he continues as the Supreme Ruler of all things. The realization of man's great responsibility should certainly humble him. (Cf. Psalm 8: 1-9.) If Gen.

1: 29 and 9: 1-3 are read in the light of each other, it appears that man was not permitted to eat flesh as food, until after the flood. (Cf. 1 Tim. 4: 1-5.) The primary meaning of the Hebrew word for "replenish" is to fill, with no idea of filling again. Some versions of the Scriptures, such as *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, and the *Revised Standard Version*, use the word fill instead of replenish.

A Complementary Statement Regarding Creation and Reconstruction (Gen. 2: 1-3)

And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.

This section of the lesson text is not a separate account of creation and renovation, but rather a further record of that which is contained in the preceding chapter, along with the fact that God did no further work along those lines. In other words, all of his work of rehabilitation, together with the creation of animal life and man, was completed in six days; and it was on the seventh day that Jehovah finished, that is, brought to an end the work which he had created (*bara*) and made (*asah*).

Our word *sabbath* comes from the term "rested," which literally means to cease or a cessation. Thus, when Jehovah "rested" or *ceased* from his work, he literally *kept sabbath*. The writer of Hebrews discusses this original idea of the term "sabbath" at some length, in the fourth chapter of that book. The Lord's people will enter into their joy, *after* they have finished, that is after they have completed or ceased from, their labors in this life. Many people seem to find it difficult to think of the term "sabbath," apart from the word "seventh." But sabbath and seventh are not synonyms; the basic meaning of sabbath is, and always has been *cessation*. Sabbath observances were commanded by the law of Moses for the *first* day

and the seventh month (Lev. 23: 23-25), and also on the *tenth* of the seventh month (Lev. 23: 26-32); and it is obvious that both of those

days could not have fallen on the seventh day. Seven has nothing to do with the basic meaning of sabbath.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of today's lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

In what ways has Jehovah revealed himself to the human race?

What great incentive do we have for learning all we can about God?

What are the principal relationships in which Jehovah has revealed himself?

Discuss some of the things which the Bible says about God as Creator.

The Golden Text

Where and under what circumstances did David write the words of the golden text?

What usually happens to the people who always think of Jehovah as their Maker?

What are some of the thoughts in this connection which should humble mankind?

Creation, Destruction, and Renovation

What remarkable revelation regarding the earth is contained in the first chapter of Genesis?

What "beginning" is referred to in verse 1?

What did Jehovah do in the beginning and what is the basic meaning of create?

If Jehovah spoke the heaven and earth into existence, how is it that Jesus was the creator?

What was the condition of that which was created when it was finished?

What happened to the earth which made its reconstruction necessary?

What and who is the Spirit of God?

Give an analysis of the first chapter of Genesis.

What was restored and what was created in Genesis 1: 3-31? Give reasons for your answer.

What was the condition of the earth at the time of this lesson and what was the first thing which God did?

The Creation of Man and His Dominion

What was done on the six days of the first chapter of Genesis?

What was the probable length of those days? Give reasons for your answer.

What peculiar grammatical construction is found in this section of the lesson text?

Why is the name "God" probably plural?

What, then, was signified when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"?

What dominion was given to man and what was he told to do?

What does it mean to have dominion over the earth and how should man be affected?

What is said regarding the food for man and beast?

In what sense were mankind to "replenish" the earth?

A Complementary Statement Regarding Creation and Reconstruction

In what way is this section of the lesson text related to the preceding ones?

What is affirmed in this part of the record?

What is the basic meaning of the term "sabbath"?

In what way was it related to the words seven and seventh?

Lesson II—July 13, 1969

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Lesson Text

John 1: 1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for witness, that

he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.

8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light.

9 There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even to them* that believe on his name:

13 Who were born, not of blood, dwelt among us (and we beheld his nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the glory, glory as of the only begotten will of man, but of God. from the Father), full of grace and

14 And the Word became flesh, and truth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* (John 14: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 1: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

July 7. M.....	Christ, Friend of Sinner (Luke 19: 1-10)
July 8. T.....	Christ, Who Justifies (Rom. 5: 6-10)
July 9. W.....	Christ, Who Ministers (Matt. 20: 20-28)
July 10. T.....	Christ, Who Loves Us (Rom. 8: 35-39)
July 11. F.....	Christ, Who Died for Us (2 Cor. 5: 11-19)
July 12. S.....	Christ, Who Saves Us (1 Pet. 1: 3-12)
July 13. S.....	Christ, Who Made Us (John 1: 1-18)

TIME.—Of John’s writing—near the close of the first century of the Christian era; of the events of the lesson—from the beginning to the incarnation.

PLACES.—Of writing—Ephesus; of the events—Eternity and Judaea.

PERSONS.—John—the writer; Jesus—the subject.

Introduction

Jesus is the most universally admired character in history. His movements on the stage of human action are with such grace and poise, that all who behold him are filled with wonder and approbation; and no one can look at him very long, without asking great questions about him. Where did he come from? How did he obtain his grace and beauty of character? How shall we account for the potency of his personality? If the record of his life and works could be removed from the earth, the best we have in those things which we treasure most would be lacking. He lives in history, in poetry, in art, and, most of all, in the hearts and lives of those who believe in him. His teaching and influence are found wherever civilization has gone.

The uniqueness of Christ does not stem from the fact that no other exceptional men have lived upon the earth. Many such men have left their footprints upon the sands of time; but not a single one of them has caused us to feel that we are compelled to account for him. The lives of others do indeed compel an interest on our part; but Jesus demands an explanation! He is revealed in the gospel records as a humble Galilean peasant; but in a little more than three short years he laid the foundation for the greatest

kingdom, and the purest religion, this world has even seen; and he has so woven his own personality into the texture of that religion, as to become its central figure, with the value of God for all his followers.

There are in reality only two views concerning Jesus: one maintains that he was a great and good man, but only a man; while the other holds that he is the Son of God, as no other being is. The first view cannot be true; for if he is not what he claimed to be, then he is neither good nor great. The second view therefore is the correct one; and it is certain that no one today signifies more to the human race, than Jesus does. Untold thousands of people love him, while a relatively few, who have never seen nor understood him, hate him; but in either case, the love or the hatred is with fervor. Although it has been more than nineteen hundred years since Jesus left the earth, he is not, as already indicated, a dead issue: he is one with whom we must still reckon. We may read of the conquests of Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon, and feel no personal concern; but not so with Jesus. He grips our attention, and challenges our interest, with the result that we must do something with him, if we are ever to have peace of mind and a clear conscience.

The Golden Text

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The words just quoted are taken from the valedictory address of Jesus to his disciples, just before his arrest, trial, and crucifixion; and they were spoken in reply to Philip's request that Jesus show them the Father. In view of the death of Jesus, and the tragic events which would precede it, the Saviour sums up the meaning of his life and ministry here upon the earth, and explains that his departure to the Father is really for the benefit of his disciples. His leaving them would not mean complete separation; for they would continue to enjoy the Divine Presence, though in a different manner. (Read John, chapters 14-16.) The golden text for today can best be understood in the light of its full context.

"Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have

known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how savest thou, Show us the Father?" (John 14: 1-9.)

Philip, in making the request that Jesus show them the Father, made the same mistake which Thomas had just made: both asked for physical, rather than for spiritual, revelations. But God is a Spirit (see John 4: 24), and cannot therefore be revealed to the physical senses. Jesus, as we shall see in the discussion of the lesson text, was sent to the earth to reveal God to man; and the sacred historian declares, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1: 18.) To see Jesus therefore is to see the Father; because the Father is in him; and is the One who works through him, as the lesson text makes plain. A physical revelation of God, if it were possible, would have been little or no benefit to the apostles; for human nature is such that all the physical demonstrations of Sinai did not keep the people of Israel from making and worshipping the golden calf.

The Text Explained

The Word's Relation to God and the Universe (John 1: 1-5)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

The first eighteen verses of the first chapter of John are usually referred to as the Prologue of that gospel narrative, in which, as Alford, notes, is summed up the sub-

stance and subject of the whole gospel. Vincent quotes Godet as saying that the Prologue is summed up in three thoughts, which also determine its plan: The Logos: the Logos disowned; the Logos acknowledged and regained. He then goes on to say that these three fundamental aspects correspond with the three principal aspects of the history as related in this gospel, namely, the revelation of the Logos; the unbelief of the Jewish people; and the faith of the disciples. "Logos" in the Greek term for *Word*.

Each of the four gospel writers, as any reader can see, had a beginning point for his narrative. Matthew began with the genealogy of Jesus, beginning with Abraham, and the

virgin birth; Luke began with the birth of John the Baptist; Mark began with the preaching of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus; while John began his record by going back into Eternity. John wrote his narrative after the other three had finished theirs; and it is obvious that he had a different purpose in mind. The first three narratives are frequently referred to as the *Synoptic Gospels*, that is, those with a common point of view; while John's narrative, in contrast with the others, is often called the *Fourth Gospel*. John omitted many of the events in the life of Jesus, which the others recorded, and dealt more with the spiritual aspect of our Lord and his ministry. John's apparent reason for all of this was to combat the errors of the advocates of *Gnosticism*, who denied much of the basic teaching regarding Christ and the divine revelation.

The "beginning" to which John referred in the opening remarks of his narrative, was the beginning which antedated the creation of Genesis 1: 1. The *beginning* of Genesis 1: 1 refers to the beginning of the created universe; not to the beginning of God. And so, the expression, as used by John, is equivalent to saying that the Word had a being before the world existed. "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17: 5.) The "beginning" of John 1: 1 therefore denotes absolute pre-existence, insofar as the universe is concerned. (Cf. John 8: 58; Ex. 3: 13, 14.) It appears that the verb "was" is used in verses 1, 2 in contrast with "were made" and "became" in verses 3, 14. Inspired writers, in speaking of the creation of the world in the abstract, attribute it to the word or commandment of God; and it should be noted that the terms just referred to are, in that setting, spelled with small letters. "By the *word* of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he *commanded*, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33: 6, 9.) "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the *word* of God, so that what is seen hath not

been made out of things which appear." (Heb. 11: 3.) Jehovah's *word* therefore was his means and method of creation; and it was in this way that he expressed, or made known, his will. It was this "word" which later became flesh, and appeared in history was Jesus Christ, God's Son, the One through whom Jehovah revealed himself to men.

John declares in the section of the lesson text which is now before us, that the Word is both the source of life, and that which enlightens and sustains men in this world. (Cf. John 8: 12.) The light of God's Son shines in the darkness; and the darkness has never been able to overcome it. (See marginal note.) Williams renders verses 4 and 5 in these words, "It was by him that life began to exist, and that life was the light of mankind. So the light continues to shine in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it." Goodspeed translates the passage in this way: "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." Some one has observed that all the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of a single candle; and if that is true of something which men can make and light, then no one should be surprised that the light of God's Son is still shining. This means, of course, that no one needs to be in the dark with reference to anything which he should do, in order to be well pleasing unto the Lord. (Cf. John 7: 17; Matt. 13: 12; Heb. 5: 11-14.)

The Basic Mission of John the Baptist

(John 1: 6-8)

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.

It is in this section of the lesson text that John, for the first time, reaches the realm of history in his narrative. Hitherto he has been concerned with that which was in the beginning, and before time, as we know it, began. There are two

interesting things to note with reference to John the Baptist, namely,

(1) his divine mission; he was "sent from God"; and (2) the fact that he is simply called "John." That John the Baptist was divinely sent is not only affirmed in the text now before us; it is likewise a matter of prophecy, as well as history. (Cf. Mark 1: 2-4; Mai. 3: 1; Isa. 40: 3-5; John 1: 33-34.) The probable reason why the writer of the Fourth Gospel never refers to John as John the Baptist, was due to the fact that his own name was John; and he therefore wrote as if the Baptist was the only John who was entitled to the distinction of having his name recorded in the sacred history.

After introducing the subject of his gospel narrative as the Word of God, John, like Mark, begins his historical record with the work of the harbinger; and he clearly shows why God sent the forerunner, namely, to be a witness. And it is well, just here, to observe that the passage now before us is only one of several in the narrative from which it is taken, which carefully indicates that John the Baptist was inferior to Jesus. (See John 1: 15, 24-27, 30; 3: 28-30; 4: 1; 5: 33-36; 10: 41.) Vincent points out that the emphatic development of the idea of witness is peculiar to John's gospel; and he quotes Westcott as saying that it evidently belongs to a time when men had begun to reason about the faith, and to analyze the grounds on which it rested.

The prominence of the idea of witnessing, in the gospel now before us, may be seen by reading the following passages, namely, (1) the witness of the Father, 5: 37; 8: 18; (2) the witness of Christ himself, 8: 14; 18: 37; (3) the witness of works, 5: 36; 10: 25; (4) the witness of scripture, 5: 39, 46; 1: 45; (5) the witness of John the Baptist, 1: 7; 5: 33; (6) the witness of the disciples, 15: 27; 19: 35; 21: 24; and (7) the witness of the Holy Spirit, 15: 26; 16: 13, 14; cf. 1 John 5: 7.

The Relation of the Word to Man-kind

(John 1: 9-14)

There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in

the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

John begins this section of the lesson text with a contrast between the forerunner of Christ and the Word. The Baptist himself was a light (John 5: 33-35); but he was not the true light. Judging from the punctuation in verse 9, it appears that the "coming into the world" refers to the light, rather than to every man; and the light in turn, that is, the true light, has reference to the Word, or to Jesus who was the Word which had become flesh. As Jesus was nearing the close of his public ministry here among men, he said, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." (John 12: 46.) The true light existed from the beginning, but it was coming into the world during the ministry of John the Baptist. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." (John 3: 19-21.)

With the coming of Christ, or the Word, into the world, he was, of course, in the world which he had created; but the world, that is the people of the world, did not recognize or know him. He simply did not meet their expectations of the Messiah. This is a good illustration of the danger of coming to the word of God with preconceived ideas about its teaching. The people of Christ's day had the Old Testament, but the views which they held re-

garding its predictions kept them from recognizing Christ as the Coming One. Verse 11 says, "He came unto his own [*his own things, marginal reading*], and they that were his own received him not." The first "his own" is neuter, and the meaning is neuter as the marginal reading notes. But, the second "his own" is masculine, and the reference is to his own people—"they that were his own." And in making this application, the writer of the Fourth Gospel passed from the general to the specific action of the Word as the light of the world.

Not every one to whom Christ came, however, rejected him; for there were some among the people who did receive him, and they were and are the ones *who believe on his name*. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." The primary reference was to the Jewish people; but the principle is applicable to all people throughout the Christian dispensation. To "receive" Christ is to *believe* on him, that is, to accept the divine testimony regarding him. However it should be carefully noted that those who believe on him are not his people, merely because they believe on him: the record teaches that they have the *right to become his people*.

The original word for "right" in verse 12 is *exousian*, and its literal meaning is authority; and as used in the passage now before us, the idea is that believers have the legitimate right to become God's people, because the Lord, that is, the One who decides such matters, has *authorized* it. This right, growing out of the divine authorization, is the inspired way of saying that believers have the privilege, rather than the inherent ability, of becoming God's children; and the entire conception, as stated by both John and Paul (cf. Eph. 2: 8, 9), is that membership in the Lord's family, or, which is the same thing, salvation from alien sins, is a gift from God which must be received by the one who desires it. Verses 11 and 12 are rendered by Williams in these words: "He came into his own world, but his own people did not welcome him. But to all who did accept him, and trust in his name,

he gave the right to become the children of God." The final clause in the quotation just given is translated by Weymouth: "He has given the privilege of becoming children of God."

Paul told the Roman brethren that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes it; and he then told them that God's righteousness, or that which he expects them to become and be, is revealed in the gospel. (See Rom. 1: 16, 17; cf. 10: 1-3.) The Jews took pride in the fact that they were born children of Abraham, and therefore children of God (cf. Matt. 3: 7-9); but Jesus makes it plain that fleshly relationships do not count with him. (See Mark 3: 31-35; John 3: 1-5; cf. Acts 2: 36-41.) Jesus alone is the Saviour of men today (Acts 4: 12; John 14: 6), and he, of course, has the authority to designate the terms upon which that blessing can be achieved. (Cf. John 6: 44, 45.) Paul, as already noted in Rom. 10: 1-3, makes it abundantly clear that ignorance of God's plan for saving the lost, will result in a failure to do as God directs.

One of the chief dogmas of the heretical Gnostics of John's day was the denial that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. (See 2 John 7.) They admitted that *Jesus* came in the flesh, but they denied that he was the Christ. Their contention was that Christ, a wholly spiritual being, descended upon Jesus, a wholly human being, at the latter's baptism, remained with him during his public ministry, and then left him just before he died on the cross. This, as one can plainly see, was an open and outright denial of the death of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 3). But John declares that the Word, a wholly spiritual being, became flesh, that is, took upon himself a fleshly body and thereby became a human being, along with his divine being, and lived here upon the earth among men as Jesus Christ. (Cf. 1 John 1: 3; 2: 22; 5: 1.) Thus, in taking upon himself a fleshly body (cf. Heb. 10: 5), the Word did not give up his Divine nature; but took upon himself, in addition to his Deity and Divinity, the nature of humanity; or, to say the same thing in another way, he was, while so-

journing here upon the earth, both God and man. (See Phil. 2: 5-8.)

But the expression "became flesh" means more, as already indicated, than that he merely assumed a human body; he assumed human nature as well, and thereby identified himself with mankind. The passage now before us does not say that the Word *clothed* himself with flesh, but that he *became flesh*. He had a human body, with all that goes into a normal human being. (Cf. John 11: 33-35; 12: 27; 13: 21; 19: 30; Heb. 4: 15.) This can only mean that during his earthly sojourn, it was necessary for Jesus to live under human limitations. He could be in only one place at a time (John 11: 1-6); he depended upon God for his strength (Luke 22: 43); and he plainly declared that he did not know everything (Matt. 24: 36). Divinity was united with humanity in the incarnation.

The literal meaning of "incarnate" is to embody in flesh; 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, and to make possible a way to save them. (Cf. John 3: 16; 2 Cor. 5: 18-21.) But it should always be kept in mind 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. (See 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 relationship, which is indicated by the term "flesh." (Cf. Heb. 5: 7.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of today's lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

What effect, generally speaking, does Jesus have upon the people of the world?

What can you say of the uniqueness of his character?

What two over-all views are held regarding him?

The Golden Text

When and under what circumstance were the words of the golden text spoken?

Why would the departure of Christ to the Father really benefit the disciples?

Why is it possible for one to know the Father when he knows Jesus?

What mistake did Philip make, along with Thomas, when he asked Jesus to show them the Father?

The Word's Relation to God and the Universe

What is the relationship of the first eighteen verses of John to the rest of the book?

What, in reality, does the Prologue contain?

At what point did each of the gospel writers bring his narrative?

Why is John's record different from the other three?

To what "beginning" does John make reference?

How is it that the universe was created by the word of God and by his Son?

What great blessings are made possible to the world by the Word?

Why can't the darkness overcome the light which comes by him?

The Basic Mission of John the Baptist

What important change does John introduce in this section of the lesson text?

What two interesting things are mentioned with reference to John the Baptist?

Why did the writer of the Fourth Gospel probably always refer to him simply as "John"?

What was the primary mission of John and how was he related to Jesus?

What important teaching does the Book of John contain with reference to witnessing?

The Relation of the Word to Mankind

What contrast does John introduce in this section of the lesson text?

When did the true light come into the world?

In what two different ways do the people of the world regard that light?

Why didn't the people of the world, generally speaking, recognize Christ?

What important lesson should we learn from this?

What is affirmed in verse 11 of this section of the lesson text?

What great privilege is granted to the believer in Christ?

What does it mean for one to believe on Christ?

What is God's method of saving people in this age of the world?

What does ignorance of God's plan always do for the person involved?

What attitude toward Jesus did many people of John's day manifest?

What is the meaning of "became flesh," as it respects the Word?

Lesson III—July 20, 1969

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lesson Text

John 16: 13, 14; Acts 2: 1-4; Rom. 8: 26, 27; Gal. 5: 22-26

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.

1 And when the day of Pen'-te-cost was now come, they were all together in one place.

2 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.

3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

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 Je'-sus 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.—“*Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” (Gal. 3: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 16: 7-11.

Daily Bible Readings

July 14. M.....	Deity of the Holy Spirit (John 14: 16, 17)
July 15. T.....	Personality of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 13-15)
July 16. W.....	Holy Spirit Speaks (1 Tim. 4: 1; Rev. 2: 11)
July 17. T.....	The Holy Spirit's Words (1 Cor. 2: 6-13)
July 18. F.....	Holy Spirit Helps Us (Rom. 8: 26-30)
July 19. S.....	Holy Spirit Gave the Bible (2 Pet. 1: 19-21)
July 20. S.....	Inspired Scripture (2 Tim. 3: 14-17)

TIME.—John and Acts, A.D. 30; Galatians and Romans. A.D. 57 and 58.

PLACES.—John and Acts, Jerusalem; Galatians and Romans were written in Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, and Christians.

Introduction

After Adam and Eve were alienated from Jehovah, that meant that the race which was to issue forth from them would also be separated from their Maker; for no stream can ever rise higher than its head or source. God himself dwells in light unapproachable (1 Tim. 6: 16), and that means that mankind could never look upon this Holy Being

and live. The very thought of such a possibility tended only to fill the human race with fear. Even the face of Moses, as it reflected the light of Jehovah, made the Israelites afraid to go near him (see Ex. 34: 29-35), even though Moses himself had not actually seen the face of Jehovah (Ex. 33: 17-23.) Jehovah, of course, knew the dread of sinful hu-

manity in this respect; and it was for this reason that he clothed his Word in flesh, which was indeed himself (John 1: 1, 14), and made it possible for all men to look upon him and live (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 18-21). God's word therefore was personified, and appeared in history as Jesus Christ.

The incarnation of the Word may be regarded as the central step in the scheme of human redemption, but we are not to understand that nothing else was needed. Jehovah likewise assigned to Spirit the special work of bringing to fulfilment, in human experience, the total

meaning of Jesus Christ as God's Son and the Redeemer of the world. This is what is meant by the ministry of the Spirit. The expression "Holy Spirit," spelled with a capital "H," is nowhere found in the Old Testament Scriptures. But with the incarnation of the Word of God, the Spirit also became the Interpreter and Helper (cf. John 15: 26—marginal note; 16: 7-15), in the great effort which God made, and is making, to save the lost. And so, as we leave the Old Testament, and enter the New, the Spirit is referred to as "he," rather than "it."

The Golden Text

"Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith." The words just quoted were written in this context, namely, "O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh? Did ye suffer so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain. He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3: 1-5.)

The Book of Galatians was written by Paul to Christians who had been led astray by some Judaizing teachers. These false emissaries not only perverted the truth of the gospel (cf. Gal. 1: 6-9), but had also endeavored, and apparently had succeeded to a large extent, to destroy confidence in Paul as an apostle and as a gospel preacher. And as Paul wrote the letter from which the golden text is taken, he had three specific aims in mind, namely, (1) to establish his apostolic independence and his authority as a spokesman for the Lord, chapters 1 and 2; (2) the intrinsic truth of the gospel which he preached, chapters 3 and 4; and (3) exhortations to abide by the moral consequences which logically and legitimately result from the message which he proclaimed, chapters 5 and 6. The

question which serves as the golden text for today's lesson was asked by Paul, as he began the second phase of his letter to the unfaithful Galatians.

This was not the only time that Paul asked a question, in order to get the truth before the eyes of others. (Cf. Acts 19: 1-3.) But inasmuch as Paul's question now before us was addressed to the whole membership of the Galatian churches, it is hardly reasonable to suppose that he was speaking solely of miraculous manifestations of the Spirit; for there is no record of such power being given to all the members of a single congregation. Verse 5 makes it plain that there were miracles worked among the Galatians, but it does not say by whom they were performed; however, in view of the practice during the days of miracles, it is reasonable to suppose that some of the Galatian brethren did receive such power. (Cf. Mark 16: 17, 18; 1 Cor. 12: 4-11). But even at that, all who obeyed the gospel received the gift of the Holy Spirit before any of them received the power to work miracles. (See Acts 5: 32; John 7: 37-39; Acts 2: 38, 39; cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17; Tit. 3: 5, 6; Gal. 3: 14.) And since all of these blessings had come to the Galatians as a result of their spiritual change, that is, as a result of their having accepted Christ, it was nothing short of folly for them to think that they could be perfected by turning to mere fleshly ordinances, including circumcision.

The Text Explained

The Work of the Spirit Foretold

(John 16: 13, 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.

The words just quoted are taken from the Lord's last discourse to his disciples, just before his betrayal and arrest in the garden of Gethsemane. He was telling his followers what to expect, after he left them; and he assured them that he knew that their hearts were filled with sorrow, because of that which he had spoken to them. He then added, "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. 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. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John 16: 7-12.)

Not only were the disciples grief-stricken at the very thought of their Lord's leaving them, but the situation was such that Jesus could not explain everything to them: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now," that is, the disciples were neither emotionally nor spiritually prepared to receive the facts as the Lord was able to reveal them to them. (Cf. Heb. 5: 11-14.) Many of the things which are vitally connected with the gospel plan of salvation were, at the time Jesus delivered this discourse to his disciples, beyond the comprehension of the apostles, largely because the cardinal facts upon which it rested, had not yet been accomplished. (See 1 Cor. 15: 1-4; cf. 2: 9, 10.) It appears therefore that Jesus did not discuss with his disciples numbers of things which they

would learn later, lest he should confuse their minds in doing so. Thus, the untaught, or those whose minds are filled with other things, cannot get the full benefit of sound teaching, until the atmosphere has to some degree, at least, been cleared. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 1-3; Heb. 5: 11-14.)

This section of the lesson text assured the sorrowing disciples that, notwithstanding the fact that their Lord could not tell them about all things, they would in reality lose nothing; because all the things which Jesus referred to, along with everything related to the truth, would be revealed to them through the Spirit, who was to be with them throughout their ministry.

The original word for "guide" means *to conduct or lead along a way*. It is the same word which the eunuch employed, when he asked Philip, "How can I, except some one shall *guide* me?" (Acts 8: 31.) Jesus made it plain to his disciples that the work of the Spirit would be to see that they understood the truth. Jesus had already declared that he himself is the truth (John 14: 6), which is to say that truth resides in him, or, which is the same thing, that he is the embodiment of truth. (Cf. John 1: 14.) The Spirit therefore would speak nothing new or different from the teaching of Jesus; "for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak." This places the Spirit in the position of a *minister*, to aid in the furtherance of the cause of Christ here upon the earth.

Those who are familiar with the public ministry of Christ here among men, are aware of the fact that he was both subject to the Spirit, and was by him enabled to do his work. (Cf. Mark 1: 12; Acts 10: 38; Matt. 12: 28; Luke 4: 14-21.) 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 to men, as they 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 original word is translated "rehearsed" in Acts 14: 27. "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17); and the Holy Spirit announced it, or, which is the same thing, made that fact known.

The Coming of the Spirit and the Beginning of His Work

(Acts 2: 1-4)

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.

Jehovah, throughout the Old Testament, is represented as One God, with a Spirit, which may be spoken of as his life-principle and the divine energy with which, and by which, he carried on his diverse activities; and with a means of revealing himself and making known his will, known as his word. (See Job 26: 13; Isa. 45: 23; cf. 59: 21.) Over and over again, we read that he sent forth his Spirit and his word, for the purpose of accomplishing that which was pleasing to him. (Cf. Psalm 104: 30; Isa. 55: 10, 11.) But when the time came for him to complete and publish his plan for saving the lost, both his Spirit and his Word were sent forth to carry out that great mission, as has been repeatedly pointed out in these studies. (Cf. John 1: 1, 2, 14; Gal. 4: 4, 5; 2 Cor. 5: 18-21.)

The sending of the Spirit was predicted by Joel (2: 28-32), and Peter makes it plain in Acts 2: 14-21 that the fulfillment of that prophecy began to be fulfilled on the first Pentecost following the ascension of Jesus. The Lord himself, in one of his pronouncements during his personal ministry, said, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within

him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7: 37-39.) Jesus was glorified when he took his seat on the throne at the Father's right hand (Acts 2: 36), that is, his glory was fully realized when he began his mediatorial reign; and it is clear from the citations just made that both Christ and the Holy Spirit began their work of redemption and sanctification on the Pentecost of Acts 2.

The day of Pentecost, or simply *Pentecost*, was the second of the three great annual feasts of the Israelites, which were authorized by the law of Moses. (Ex. 23: 14-17.) The feast we are now considering was never called "Pentecost" in the Old Testament, for the simple reason that *Pentecost* is the transliteration of a Greek term, while the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The names by which the feast was called during the age of Moses were (1) the feast of harvest; (2) the feast of weeks; and (3) the day of first-fruits. (Ex. 23: 16; 34: 22; Num. 28: 26.) The method of determining the date of the feast just referred to may be learned from Leviticus 23: 15, 16 and Deuteronomy 16: 9, namely, *fifty days*, beginning with "the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering"; or, which is the same thing, "from the time that thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing grain."

There are several reasons why the Pentecost of Acts 2 is of special significance: (1) That was the first time that Jesus was heard from after his ascension. He had previously been condemned and put to death by the highest civil and ecclesiastical tribunals known to man at that time; and he had, as it were appealed his case to the Supreme Court of Heaven. The death of Jesus occurred during the time when the Jewish people were in Jerusalem for the passover feast; and it was on the day of Pentecost, the next great gathering of the people in the capital city, when the Spirit-filled messengers announced the decision of the Final Judge.

It was on the day of Pentecost, now under consideration, that the Spirit began his active ministry in the great scheme of human redemption; and any one who will read the Book of John will have no difficulty in recognizing the truth of the personality of the Holy Spirit. *He*, not it, along with the Father and the Son, is regarded as one of the *Trinity*, or, *which is the same thing*, the *Sacred Three*. This should be sufficient to convince any thoughtful person that the Holy Spirit is not *something* in which people were literally baptized. A. T. Robertson quotes Canon Cook as saying that the room was filled, so that they could be baptized in the Holy Spirit. His words are, "As a bath is filled with water, that they might be baptized with the Holy Ghost, in fulfillment of Acts 1: 5." Such a view of a literal baptism in the Holy Spirit completely ignores the personality of the third member of the Sacred Three.

This day of Pentecost marked the time when some of the prophecies concerning Christ and his kingdom began to be fulfilled. (See, for example, Joel 2: 28-32; Isa. 2: 2, 3.) And it was on this day that the first complete announcement of God's plan for saving the human race was first made, along with the first law which was issued in the name of the newly crowned King. (Read the second chapter of Acts.) This was also the day when Peter first used the "keys of the kingdom"; and it is easy to see that when the doors of the kingdom or church were opened, people of all ages and races could pass through them, live for the Lord, and finally go home to glory, if they are faithful.

Bible students have never been able to agree on the antecedent of "they," in the passage now under consideration. Johnson thinks that not only were the twelve apostles referred to, but also the hundred and twenty disciples mentioned in the preceding chapter. Alford says, "Not the apostles only, nor the hundred and twenty mentioned in chapter 1: 15; but *all the believers in Christ*, then congregated at the time of the feast in Jerusalem." McGarvey and Lipscomb, on the other hand, are convinced that the grammatical construction of the

closing part of chapter 1 and the opening portion of chapter 2 indicate that only the apostles were referred to. We know, of course, from the New Testament itself that the Spirit entered the church at the time of its establishment, which resulted in its becoming a living organism (cf. 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 12: 12, 13). If this had not been true, then the church would have been a dead body (see James 2: 26); but it does appear from Acts 2: 4ff that only the twelve apostles were in the mind of Luke when he wrote that record. There does not seem to be any evidence from which one can fairly conclude that any but the twelve apostles manifested any miraculous power on the occasion now under consideration.

It appears that the sound which was heard had the effect of bringing the multitudes to the place where the apostles were (cf. verse 6), while the tongues indicated divine favor, or the bestowing of the ability to speak in other languages. However, it may have been, as Alford suggests, that the sound was the chosen vehicle by which the Holy Spirit was manifested to their sense of hearing, while the appearance of the tongues manifested his presence to their sense of sight. Their being "filled" with the Holy Spirit was in consequence of the promise made in Acts 1: 4, 5. The apostles were the plenipotentiary ministers of Christ; and the giving of the miraculous power to them was to furnish the necessary proof that they had been duly commissioned by him. (Mark 16: 19, 20; Heb. 2: 4.)

The Intercession by and the Fruit of the Spirit

(Rom. 8: 26, 27; Gal. 5: 22-26)

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; 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.

The Christian life is not easy, and help is needed on many occasions; and that is exactly what the Spirit

proposes to do for God's people, as is illustrated in the case of prayer. This does not mean that the Spirit takes over our praying for us; but it does imply that he does aid us when we reach the limits of our own ability. The Bible teaches us to pray, but there will come times when the most enlightened of God's children do not know for what they should pray (cf. John 12: 27, 28; Phil. 1: 22-24); but they can rely on divine help when they need it. The original word for "helpeth" is found in only one other place in the New Testament (Luke 10: 40), where the idea is to share the burden.

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.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

Why was the incarnation of the Word essential in the plan to save the lost?

What is the Spirit's part in the scheme of human redemption?

The Golden Text

In what setting were the words of the golden text written?

How did Paul go about getting his teaching before the Galatians?

The Work of the Spirit Foretold

When and under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words just quoted?

Why were the disciples filled with sorrow and unable to understand the facts as they existed?

Why are so many people today unable to understand the truth?

What assurance did Jesus give to his sorrowing disciples?

What did Jesus mean by saying that the Spirit would guide his disciples into all the truth?

What relationship does the Spirit sustain to Jesus in the work of redemption?

In what way were they related during the personal ministry of our Lord?

The Coming of the Spirit and the Beginning of His Work

What is the prevailing view of Jehovah

The fruit of the Spirit, mentioned in the verses just quoted, are the moral results which the Holy Spirit brings about in the lives of those who live by the teaching of the spirit, and they are easily divided into groups of three each, with reference (1) to our relationship to God; (2) our relationship to our fellow men; and (3) our relationship to ourselves. (Cf. Tit. 2: 11, 12.)

If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not become vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

If we profess to live by the Spirit's guidance, then let us walk as he directs, that is, by the Word of God. Or, to state the same thing in another way, let our life be consistent with our profession. This will result in our having the right attitude toward both God and our fellow

throughout the whole of the Old Testament?

When and under what circumstances was the Spirit sent to participate in human salvation?

In what way are God, his Son, and his Spirit set forth in the New Testament?

When did the Son and the Spirit begin their work of saving the lost?

What was the day of Pentecost and during what part of the year did it come?

What are some of the reason which make the Pentecost of Acts 2 so important?

Why was the Spirit given to the apostles on the occasion now before us?

Under what circumstances did they receive the Spirit?

Why the "sound" which they heard and the "tongues" which they saw?

What was meant by saying that they were "filled" with the Holy Spirit?

The Intercession by and the Fruits of the Spirit

In what way does Paul say that the Spirit "helps" them?

In what way does the Spirit help us in our praying?

What is meant by the "fruit" of the Spirit?

In what way does Paul classify those fruits in this lesson?

What caution does the apostle give in the closing verses of this portion of the lesson text?

Lesson IV—July 27, 1969

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Lesson Text

Gal. 1: 11, 12; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17; 1 Cor. 2: 11-13

11 For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which

was preached by me, that it is not after man.

12 For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but *it came to me* through revelation of Je'-sus Christ.

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.

11 For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God.

12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual *words*.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*These are true words of God.*” (Rev. 19: 9.)
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 19: 7-14.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 21. M..... The Perfect Law (Psalm 19: 7-11)
- July 22. T..... Searching the Scriptures (Acts 17: 10-15)
- July 23. W..... Wondrous Things in the Law (Psalm 119: 17-24)
- July 24. T..... Word Settled in Heaven (Psalm 119: 89-96)
- July 25. F..... Teaching Scripture (Neh. 8: 1-8)
- July 26. S..... Reading Scripture (Deut. 6: 1-9)
- July 27. S..... Scriptures Necessary (John 20: 30, 31; Heb. 11: 1-6)

TIME.—A.D. 57-68.

PLACES.—The three epistles were written in Corinth, Rome, and Ephesus, respectively.

PERSONS.—Paul and the brethren to whom he wrote.

Introduction

It is interesting to observe that the original word for “inspired” occurs only one time in the entire Bible, namely, 2 Timothy 3: 16. Paul said: “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) The Hebrew word *neshamah* is translated “inspiration” in Job 32: 8, in the King James Version; but other major versions, including the American Standard Version, from which the lesson texts for all the studies in this annual are taken, render the term “breath,” which is the primary meaning of the word, as may be seen by reading Genesis 2: 7, which says: “And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the *breath* of life; and man be-

came a living soul.” “Breath,” then, is the primary meaning of the term, rather than *inspiration*.

But when we consider the fact that the inspired Scriptures are “God-breathed,” it is not difficult to see how that idea entered into the King James rendering of Job 32: 8, which says, “But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” The same passage is translated in the American Standard Version in this way, “But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” But notwithstanding the fact that the actual word for “inspired” is found only one time in the entire Bible, it is a fact, worthy of notice, that there is not a book in the Sacred Collection which does not, in one way or another, lay claim to being Divinely inspired.

The Bible not only claims to be an inspired revelation from God; it also claims to be *verbally* inspired. "Which things also we speak, not in

words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." (1 Cor. 2: 13.)

The Golden Text

"These are true words of God." Although spoken by the messenger who had been sent to enable John to see and hear that which is contained in the Book of Revelation, there is no doubt regarding the source of the message which was spoken. This is one of the many instances throughout the Bible, which illustrate the proposition set forth earlier in this study, namely, there is not a book in the Sacred Collection which does not, in one way or another, lay claim to being Divinely inspired. The various books of the Bible, in fact, are so interrelated, as to make it impossible to claim inspiration for one part, while denying it to another. (Cf. Luke 24: 44; Ezra 3: 2, Mai. 4: 4; Isa. 7: 14; Matt. 1: 22, 23; Luke 11: 29-32; Rom. 11: 2, 3; Hos. 13: 14; 1 Cor. 15: 55; 2 Pet. 3: 15, 16.) No one can read the different books of the Bible, without being impressed with the fact that they claim to have come from God. (See Jer. 1: 4-10; Ezek. 1: 1-3; 2: 1-7; Jonah 1: 1, 2; 3: 1, 2; Gal. 1: 11, 12; Rev. 1, 2.)

The expression "inspired of God" has reference to the influence which the Spirit of God exerted upon the writers of the Bible, by which they were empowered to teach such spiritual truths, and to such a degree, as was essential for the religious welfare of the people to whom, and for

whom, their message was intended. (Cf. John 14: 26; 16: 13; Acts 2: 4; 1 Pet. 1: 10-12.) The *fact* of inspiration, rather than the particular *manner* in which the Spirit exerted his influence upon the speakers and writers of the Bible, is the lesson which we need to have impressed upon our minds at this time.

Furthermore, inspiration does not imply that the writers of the Bible were lifted altogether above the level of their contemporaries in matters of purely secular import; or, to express the same thing in another way, inspiration does not imply supernatural infusion of knowledge on subjects within their own reach, concerning which they could gain information by study, research, and observation. (Cf. Luke 1: 1-4; Jude 3.) But when it came to making known the will of God, regarding the scheme of human redemption, plenary inspiration was absolutely essential. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6-10.) But the writers of the Bible, even in matters which belong to the realm of the senses, evidently wrote under the *supervision* of the Holy Spirit, thereby avoiding error; for in no other way could it be said that their compositions came from God, or, which is the same thing, that their compositions are true words of God.

The Text Explained

The Gospel Which Paul Preached

(Gal. 1: 11, 12)

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.

The apostle Paul claimed to be a gospel preacher, that is, he claimed to preach the gospel which had come to him directly from the Lord. It is not possible, of course, for preachers today to make such a claim; but it is possible for them to

claim to preach the gospel which has been revealed from heaven, and divinely put into writing; and they can know for a certainty that they are preaching the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, to those who believe and obey it. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16; Rom. 1: 16, 17; Heb. 5: 8, 9.) It should be remembered, however, that only by faithfully proclaiming that which has been written, can one be sure that he is preaching the gospel which is pleasing to the Lord. (Cf. Gal. 1: 6-9.)

The subject of our lesson for today is "The Inspiration of the

Scriptures," and its implication should be kept clearly in mind. The section of the lesson text which we are now considering affirms that the gospel which Paul preached came to him "through revelation of Jesus Christ." The terms "Inspiration" and "revelation" are sometimes confused in the minds of Bible readers, and this is a good place to call attention to the fact that there is a wide difference between the two expressions. *Revelation* is the act of revealing or making known something to some one else; while *inspiration* is the ability to record accurately that which has been revealed or made known. In his book, *Sermons and Lectures of B. C. Goodpasture*, the author points out that "inspiration means that influence which God exercises through the Holy Spirit over the minds of Biblical writers to make them infallible in the receiving and recording of his will. There is a difference, however, between revelation and inspiration.

"Revelation has reference to the communication of knowledge. It renders its recipient wiser. It is the means through which God imparts facts and truths not previously known. Persons uninspired sometimes received revelations in Bible times. The children of Israel, assembled under the burning crags of Sinai, heard God speak in awful majesty (Ex. 20; 18-21; Heb. 12: 19); but no one would claim that they were all inspired. When the martyr, Stephen, was being stoned, he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.' (Acts 7: 56.) This was a revelation, but who would claim that the unbelieving Jews who heard it and stoned Stephen were inspired?

"On the other hand, inspiration has reference primarily to the accurate communicating of knowledge. It preserves its recipient from error in teaching. It is possible that some of the writers of the Bible received no revelations. This is possibly true of some of the writers of the historical books of the Old Testament. The writers were certainly inspired in the selection and recording of facts within the realm of human experience, but this would not require

revelation. The account of the wilderness wanderings was not a matter of revelation, but rather of fact known by personal observation. Luke does not claim to be the recipient of any revelation. He says he derived his material from those 'which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word.' He 'traced the course of all things accurately from the first.' (Luke 1: 2, 3.) He did this by inspiration, but in doing so he was not primarily the recipient of any revelation. Thus it is possible for one to receive revelation without inspiration, and to receive inspiration without revelation. Not all the Bible is revelation, but it is all inspired. It contains revelation; it is wholly inspired."

The Scriptures Are God-Breathed

(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. 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.

One is always in a better position to understand a passage of scripture, if he has some knowledge of its general context, along with the occasion for writing it. The words just quoted are from Paul's final letter; and that makes his remarks impressive. Timothy was converted by Paul, and it is clear from the latter's remarks about him that he loved him as much, as he would have, had he been his own son in the flesh. (Cf. 2 Tim. 1: 2; Phil. 2: 19-24.) Paul had suffered much for the cause of Christ, and he knew that a similar fate awaited his son in the gospel. The apostle was a mature man, but Timothy apparently possessed a timid nature, and Paul could picture him as he would be called upon to suffer in his Christian service. And so, after the salutation, the apostle presented a plea to

his son for loyalty to the gospel in the face of a grave crisis. (2 Tim. 1: 3-18.) Chapter 2 is devoted to a detailed appeal for a courageous effort in perpetuating the gospel, and the temper needed for the task. The apostle then, in chapter 3, pointed out to his son in the gospel that the last days will be testing ones, but that the younger man was prepared for them. It was at the close of this section of the letter that Paul pointed out to his son in the faith his God-given resources for meeting any eventuality; and that is the section of the lesson text now under consideration.

Paul said in the first section of the lesson text for today, that the gospel he preached came by revelation of Christ; and in the section of the text now before us, he says that "*every scripture is inspired of God*" (see marginal note), which means that the contents of the Bible are *God-breathed*. The religion of Christ is a taught religion (cf. Matt. 28: 18-20); and no one can please the Lord who does not receive this inspired instruction. Timothy's mother and grandmother had seen to it that their son knew the scriptures; and his position therefore was in marked contrast with those who were not governed by divine truth. "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, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." It is always a wonderful experience, as one becomes familiar with the truth and orders his life by it.

The "sacred writings" were evidently mainly the Old Testament Scriptures, and they were able to make Timothy wise unto salvation, when they were interpreted in the light of the revelation concerning the coming and mission of Christ. Paul says that "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10: 4). Not only did Christ bring the law of Moses to an end (see Col. 2: 14); he was also the purpose for which the law was given (cf. Gal. 3: 23-29).

That which is said in this part of the lesson text regarding the inspiration of the Scriptures, is equally

true of the Writing of both Testaments, as may be seen from the passages cited earlier in this study; and they are all 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 should be kept constantly in mind, that the New Testament is the portion of God's word under which people must live today.

Paul mentions four things for which the Scriptures are profitable, namely, (1) For *teaching*. No one can do that which is pleasing to God, before he knows what his will for him is. (Cf. Heb. 5: 8, 9; Acts 22: 10, 2: 42.) (2) For *reproof*. The word of the Lord not only convicts the guilty of wrongdoing; it is also the means by which his sin is exposed and rebuked. (3) For *correction*. It is not enough simply to convince one of disobedience, and condemn him for it; it is the duty of the "spiritual" (Gal. 6: 1) to make an effort to restore, or, which is the same thing, bring the offender back to his proper relationships, both with reference to God and man.

(4) For *instruction which is in righteousness*. Continuous training and discipline are essential, if the person in question is to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. (Cf. 2 Pet. 3: 18; Tit. 2: 11-14.)

The over-all purpose for which the Scriptures were given, is that the man of God may be complete, and furnished completely unto every good work. This means that the Bible, as God gave it, is sufficient for every need, which any child of God 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 suggest that the principles which are set forth in the Bible, and especially the New Testament, do cover and are applicable to all the issues of life. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 3-11.)

The Manner in Which God's Inspiration Works

(1 Cor. 2: 11-13)

For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so

the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words.

The Bible itself repeatedly makes the claim that the message which is contained therein is from God. Many of the truths of the Scriptures were mysteries to the human race before the Lord revealed them. It appears that the Corinthian brethren, or some of them at least, charged Paul with more or less "shallow preaching"; and his reply to them is contained in the verses which immediately precede this section of the lesson text. His words follow:

"We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written,

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,

And which entered not into the heart of man,

Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.

But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

It is easy to see that in this section of the lesson text we have both "revelation" and "inspiration"; and it is also very clear that both were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit made known the will of God, and whatever other truth man should have; and he then gave the ability to both the speakers and writers to utter and record those things accurately. The illustration in verse 11 shows why it was necessary that the revelation be made through the Spirit; and verse 12

makes it plain that the apostles of Christ had the Spirit, and were therefore able to know, as well as to make known, that which God had provided for his people. Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, made this prediction, namely, "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." (John 16: 13.)

We are told that the three laws of learning are repetition, repetition; and inasmuch as repetition is so essential to learning, a further word is here offered on the difference between "revelation" and "inspiration"; for, as pointed out earlier in this lesson, these two terms are sometimes confused, with the result that neither is clear in the mind of those who are so affected. *Revelation* is that which God, through his Spirit, revealed to certain individuals; whereas, *inspiration* is the method by which those disclosures were made known to others. *Revelation* is that body of truth which God made known to men by miraculous means; *inspiration* is that inexplicable influence of the Holy Spirit, which enabled the men who wrote the Bible to record that which God wants men to know, as well as to speak orally (cf. Acts 2: 4), and to keep them from all error and omission. *Revelation* is that truth which men can learn, only as God revealed it to them; whereas, *inspiration* is the Divine influence which enabled the original writers to transcribe (see 1 Pet. 1: 10-12; Acts 2: 29-31) that which God wanted preserved in his Word, and to embody it correctly in human language, so that the record is both inerrant (free from error) and infallible (incapable of error). "Revelation" deals with the *what*; "inspiration," with the *how*.

The Standard Bible Commentary, in commenting on verse 1, says, "Here again we have a clear claim to inspiration, and not only so, but *verbal* inspiration. Paul did not reason after the manner of worldly philosophers, but imparted his truth under the guidance of the Spirit, who taught him the words to use, so

that he taught spiritual truths with spiritual words, a fitting combination. The leaders of our current Reformation did well in conforming to this rule, by seeking to express Bible thoughts in Bible language. To Paul the terms and phrases of theology would have been as distasteful as those of philosophy, because equally man-made and uninspired." Many professed gospel preachers and teachers among us today would do well to learn this lesson, and follow this rule.

Paul's words in verse 13 is a direct claim to *plenary* inspiration; and it is in complete harmony with a statement which was made by Peter, namely, "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever

came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1: 19-21.) Goodspeed renders 1 Corinthians 2: 13 in these words: "These disclosures we impart, not in the set phrases of human philosophy, but in words the Spirit teaches, giving spiritual truth a spiritual form." There are some people who allege that the *thoughts* of God's revealed will to man were Divinely inspired; and that the men who made them known to others were allowed to express those thoughts in their own words. But if one will consider the facts in the case, he will see that this idea, in addition to being directly opposed to 2 Pet. 1: 20, 21, is the exact reverse of the truth of the matter; for the Bible teaches that God always gave the *words* of his revelation, but did not always make known the thoughts which were behind the words. (Cf. Dan. 12: 8, 9; 1 Pet. 1: 10-12; Acts 2: 39; 10: 1-35.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

Where and in what circumstances is the term "inspired" found in the Bible?

What is the basic meaning of the word inspired?

What claim does the Bible itself make with reference to its inspiration?

The Golden Text

How many books of the Bible claim to be inspired? Give reason for your answer.

What important lesson do we learn from the interrelation of the books of the Bible?

Cite and discuss some instances of this interrelation.

What assurance do we have, frequently stated, that the Bible did come from God?

What is meant by the expression "inspired of God"?

Did everything in the Bible, in the light of Luke 1: 1-4; Jude 3, require special revelation?

Were the records just referred to inspired? Give reason for your answer.

The Gospel Which Paul Preached

Why did Paul claim to be a gospel preacher and what about such a claim by one today?

How can a preacher now know for certain that he is preaching the gospel?

What is the difference between "revelation" and "inspiration"?

Was it possible, in Bible times, for one to receive revelation without being inspired? Give reasons for your answer.

The Scriptures Are God-Breathed

Discuss the general context of this section of the lesson text.

Why was Timothy equipped for any eventuality which he might experience?

What does this section of the lesson text affirm regarding the Scriptures?

What was the basic difference between Timothy and those who did not follow the teaching of the Lord?

What kind of training had Timothy received during his younger days?

What did Paul refer to when he spoke of the "sacred writings"? Why do you say so?

Of what value are the Old Testament Scriptures to us today?

Why must people in this age give particular heed to the New Testament?

What is the value of the inspired word to people now?

What is the over-all purpose of the Bible for us?

The Manner in Which God's Inspiration Works

What claim does the Bible itself repeatedly make regarding its origin?

What does Paul say with reference to the origin of the Scriptures?

What is the relationship between "revelation" and "inspiration"?

Discuss at length their differences.

What does the Bible claim with reference to *verbal* inspiration and what is meant by the expression?

What did Paul say that his method of preaching and writing was?

What great need with reference to this is in evidence today and why is it so?

Explain why the Scriptures are both "inerrant" and "infallible"?

What is meant by "plenary" inspiration?

Lesson V—August 3, 1969

THE FALL OF MAN

Lesson Text

Gen. 3: 1-6, 16-24

1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Je-ho'-vah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat:

3 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.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 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.

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.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 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 of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 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.

20 And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21 And Je-ho'-vah God made for Adam and his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.

22 And Je-ho'-vah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever—

23 Therefore Je-ho'-vah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cher'-u-bim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."* (Ezek. 18: 4.)
 DEVOTIONAL READING.—ROM. 5: 12-18.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 28. M. The First Sin (Gen. 3: 1-8)
- July 29. T. Sin Defined (1 John 3: 4; 5: 17)
- July 30. W. Extent of Sin (Rom. 3: 9-20)
- July 31. T. Corruption of Sin (Isa. 1: 10-17)
- August 1. F. Confession of Sin (Psalm 51: 1-10)
- August 2. S. Forgiveness of Sin (Mark 2: 1-12)
- August 3. S. Christ, Our Advocate (1 John 2: 1-6)

TIME.—A.M. 1 (the first year of the world, also 4004 B.C.), or soon thereafter.

PLACE.—The garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Adam, and Eve.

Introduction

Man was created in the image and likeness of God, which means that he was morally and spiritually perfect; and there is, of course, every reason to believe that he also had a perfect body. Man, indeed, was like God, and the surroundings in which he lived were, with one exception, conducive to a perfect life. That one exception was the presence of the tempter. The sole aim of Satan for the future was to lure as many of God's creatures into rebellion against their Maker as possible. John Milton, in his great poem, *Paradise Lost*, endeavoring to describe the feeling of Satan after the fall, says,

All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind, created, and for him this World!
So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear,
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As Man ere long, and this new World, shall know.

The writer of *Ecclesiastes*, in commenting on the sin and waywardness of the human race, says, "Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inven-

tions." (Eccl. 7: 29.) It does not require much effort on the part of any one to see that one of the great tragedies in the experience of mankind is the lost sense of sin. This condition has prevailed throughout the entire age of Bible history; and it appears to be growing worse. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 1ff; and the Book of Revelation.) Most people in the average community, in our country, look upon Christ as the dominant personality of the ages, and theoretically as the Savior of men; but when it comes to the sense of sin from which he proposes to save them, they have largely lost sight of that.

But sin, like everything else which is common to the experience of the human race, had its beginning; and that is the story which is before us in this lesson. Sin entered into the hearts and lives of the first human pair, when they listened to the evil one and turned aside from the commandment of the Lord. Jehovah told them what to do in language which they could understand, and which they did understand; but the woman was deceived by the tempter, and was led to think that she was benefiting herself, when she sought to become wise by eating the forbidden fruit. Adam was not beguiled (1 Tim. 2: 14), but deliberately followed his wife into sin. Their fall was so complete, and consequently that of the entire race, as to make a new creation (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17) essential, before paradise could be restored (Cf. Rev. 21: 5).

The Golden Text

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The words just quoted are the closing part of the first paragraph of the chapter, from which the golden text for today's lesson is taken. The entire paragraph reads as follows: "The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is

mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18: 1-4.)

One of the chief characteristics of the human race, or so it seems, is to endeavor to place the responsibility for one's sins on somebody else. That practice began with Adam and Eve; and, insofar as is known, it has never ceased. After the sin in the garden of Eden, "Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof

I commanded thee thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (Gen. 3: 9-13.)

It is true, of course, as the Scriptures make abundantly clear, that people are affected by the sins of others; but the Bible nowhere teaches that the individual can escape responsibility for his own sins, by blaming them on others. Jehovah did not accept the excuses which the first human pair offered; and he has never accepted such an alibi from any one else. Paul teaches precisely the same lesson in Galatians 6: 1-5. Adam and Eve, as

already noted, were responsible for sin in the human race, that is, they were responsible for the beginning of sin. If they had remained faithful to their Maker, their descendants would have had a better chance against temptation; but when the fountain head was corrupted, the stream which flowed from it could never be pure again, without divine assistance. This is another way of saying that because Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, the human race inherited a fallen nature and a tendency toward sin; and that has made it impossible for any man, in and of himself, to live above sin. But the Lord has promised help to all who recognize their weakness (1 Cor. 10: 13), and who will accept the responsibility for their sins (1 John 1: 8-10).

The Text Explained

Temptation and Disobedience

(Gen. 3: 1-6)

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.

There does not appear to be any reason for thinking that the serpent, as he came to Eve in the garden, was in the form in which we know serpents today. It is fair, in fact, to infer from Genesis 3: 14 that the serpent was originally an upright animal. At any rate, Eve was not afraid of him; for the incident now before us took place before the dread of any of the creatures under

the rule of man had been realized. The serpent had the power of speech, or so it seems, and he communicated freely with the mother of our race. He is described as being more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made; and that indicates that he was cunning, crafty, and artful. Satan is nowhere mentioned by name in this entire narrative; but it is certain that he was the real tempter. (Cf. John 8: 44; Rev. 12: 9; 2 Cor. 11: 3, 14.) It appears fair to assume, from the passages just cited and other truths contained in the Scriptures, that Satan chose the serpent as the instrument of temptation, because of his peculiar fitness for the task. His wily, insidious character especially qualified him for the work which Satan wanted accomplished.

If one will keep in mind the nature and character of the serpent, it will be easy for him to see why the tempter did not come at once to the point, and make it plain to the woman just what he was planning to do. And so, instead of speaking plainly, the serpent insinuated and sought to raise doubts in the woman's mind. (1 Tim. 2: 14; cf. Heb. 3: 13.) The serpent sought to deceive by distorting the meaning of Jehovah's prohibition, and then by holding up the perversion to ridicule. He even went so far as to express surprise that Jehovah would issue such a prohibition in the first

place; and then endeavored to destroy faith in the heart of the woman, by sowing seeds of doubt and suspicion, and by presenting false pictures of Jehovah, especially with reference to motives.

This is precisely the same principle which Satan employs today, in his effort to bring about disobedience on the part of those who should listen to the Lord. Although referring specifically to the law of Moses (the principle is true of any commandment of the Lord), Paul personifies sin and says, "For sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me." (Rom. 7: 11.) In the case of Eve, the serpent took a commandment which she understood perfectly, and used it to deceive her into thinking that God did not actually mean that which he had said about it; and in the same manner today, the evil one takes a commandment which is well known to every one, baptism as a condition of salvation, for example, and deceives people into thinking that God does not actually mean for them to obey it. Such a move on the part of Satan is a deliberate attempt to reflect unfavorably upon the God of the Bible, and to destroy faith in his integrity as a lawgiver.

The woman was innocent, guileless, and unsuspecting; and she was certainly no match for the insidious tempter. She never should have entered into a conversation with him; but then she had no example to guide her. Jesus had a similar experience with the devil; and he has showed us how to deal with all such temptations, namely, by stating that which God has said, and then remaining true to his requirements. (Cf. Matt. 4; 1-11.) Eve knew exactly that which God had commanded her to do, and she told the tempter just what the instructions were; but she made the fatal mistake of allowing him to deceive her into thinking that it was not necessary for her to do that which Jehovah commanded. This policy on the part of countless thousands of people has resulted in their eternal destruction. (Cf. 1 Pet. 5: 8, 9; James 4: 7; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9.)

The fact that Eve explained to the serpent God's requirement in detail plainly shows that she knew what

she should do; but when she entered into a parley with the evil one, she gave him the opportunity to ply his nefarious wares. His foot was in the door, and he immediately grew bolder, and advanced more powerful arguments. He insinuated that man wanted to be on an equal with his Creator, but that Jehovah had deliberately kept him from attaining that goal by the commandment which he had given. The serpent then went on to charge God with selfishness and a malicious falsehood; and represented him as being envious and unwilling for his creatures to have that which would make them like their omniscient Creator.

When the serpent, inspired by the devil, told Eve that she and her husband would not die, if they ate the forbidden fruit, he was guilty of uttering the first lie of recorded history. Jehovah had said that they would die, if they ate the fruit of the tree in question; but Satan said that such was not the truth. (Cf. John 8; 44.) The devil's purpose was to raise doubts in the mind of the woman, and to cause her to be suspicious of God himself. The devil who managed such adroit persuasion did not limit his activities to the garden of Eden; he still plies his trade today by implying that our judgment of what is the better course to follow, is sometimes better than that of Jehovah himself.

The entrance of sin into the heart and lives of mankind, is one of the most far-reaching events in the history of the world. Every sorrow and pain, and every death, both physical and spiritual, can be traced directly to this first sin. (Cf. Rom. 5; 12-21.) Every bloody sacrifice throughout the Old Testament period was a vivid testimony to the fact of sin; and it required the offering of the Immaculate Son of God himself, to make possible the salvation of those who were, and are, held within its bondage. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 21; John 8: 34.) The verbs of Genesis 3: 6 clearly tell the story of the fall of mankind. And we also learn from the verse something of the manner in which temptation works. As the woman continued to look upon the forbidden fruit, it made its appeal to her—to her vision, to her taste, and to her desire

for wisdom. (Cf. 1 John 2: 15-17.) And so, with something within her reach which would satisfy all her desires, Eve made bold to take the forbidden step. The serpent had succeeded in his mission to deceive the woman and to lead her into disobedience; and his services were no longer needed: Eve could do the rest, and it appears that she did so immediately. Adam willingly took the forbidden fruit from the hand of his wife, and sin, insofar as the human race was concerned, became a grim reality.

First Payment for Sin Exacted (Gen. 3: 16-21)

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 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 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. And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.

If one will read the preceding part of the paragraph from which this section of the lesson text is taken, he will learn of the curse which was pronounced upon the serpent, for his part in instigating the rebellion against Jehovah; and he will also read that great promise of God which has been described as the earliest statement of the gospel, which pointed the way to the redemption of the human race from the bondage of sin, that is, for all who would accept the Lord's gracious offer. It appears that the specific conflict which was referred to was the struggle between Christ and Satan, as the former defeated the latter, when Christ broke the bars of

death, and emerged, as the victor over death, Hades, and the grave.

Jehovah predicted two things for the woman, as he pronounced the curse over her, namely, (1) pain in the incidents which are essential to the bearing of children; and (2) subjection to her husband, or, which is the same thing, the subjection of womankind to mankind. The apostle Paul discusses these issues somewhat in detail in two of his epistles, namely First Timothy and First Corinthians.

But womankind was not destined to suffer alone; for the record points out that suffering and hardship would also be the lot of the man, who, for the first time in recorded history, was called Adam. (Cf. Gen. 2: 20, marginal note.) And in speaking of the lot of mankind, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* observes that "physical hardship, painful toil, disappointing vexations, and hard struggle were appointed as the lot of the man, who was definitely adjudged a guilty sinner. Formerly the earth had yielded its produce easily and freely to man, in great abundance. Adam had only to 'dress' the garden (2: 15) in order to enjoy its luscious fruits. But now God pronounced a special curse on the ground. Henceforth it would yield its grain and fruits reluctantly. Man would have to work hard cultivating the soil to make it produce life's necessities. And he would have to wrestle with troublesome thorns and weeds not previously in evidence. Drudgery, difficulties, and weariness would be his daily lot. For Adam, as well as for Eve, sin exacted a heavy toll." (Cf. Rom. 8: 18-25.)

Adam at first called the name of his wife Woman [Hebrew, *Isshah*, marginal note], because she was taken out of Man [Hebrew, *Ish*, marginal note]. (Gen. 2: 23.) Here, for the first time, Adam called his wife's name Eve, "because she was the mother of all living." This name was most appropriate since all human life originated in and issued from the first human pair—Adam being the father, and Eve being the mother. One might suppose that Adam, when he first heard the pronouncement of death, because of the sin of the woman and the man, would think that his wife was the

mother of death, rather than of life; but being possessed of a better hope, with reference of things to come, he thought of life rather than of death. Jamieson thinks that the prophetic reference was pre-eminently to Christ, and all who live by him (cf. John 1: 4); and he adds, "Thus a whole history was comprised within the folds of a single word, and the name Eve would, in the early ages of the world, preserve amongst the people of God the blessed hope of a Redeemer." It was also at this time that the first human pair began to wear permanent clothing, which had been made, by Jehovah especially for them.

The Expulsion from the Garden

(Gen. 3: 22-24)

And Jehovah God said. Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever—therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

If we look at the situation from the human point of view, and endeavor to describe it after the manner of men, we would say that Jehovah, realizing that which man had done, took the necessary steps to see to it that his creature, who had been made in his likeness, would not perpetuate himself in his sinful condition—"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and

eat, and live for ever." Thus, it was with loving care that Jehovah took the necessary steps to keep Adam and Eve away from the fruit which, if they should eat it, would make them immortal, and thereby perpetuate them in the terrible condition into which their sin had brought them.

Paradise was lost by the first human pair; but, as we have already seen, steps were immediately taken to see to it that those who will to do so, may one day regain it. That is the story of the Bible itself. In the first part of the Book we read about the closed garden; but in the last part of the Inspired Volume we are told about an open city, the grandeurs of which are beyond the ability of human beings to conceive. It is indeed a long, but an immensely profitable, journey through the Bible; but every thoughtful person should be vitally interested in that which lies between the closed garden and the open city of Revelation, that is, an open city to all who desire to enter. The story of that journey is the story of human redemption, and that which Jesus did in perfecting that plan is the central theme of the story. But there are two things which every responsible person must learn, and become fully aware of, before he can rightfully hope to pass through the gates into the city of God, namely, (1) he must realize that he is hopelessly lost, insofar as his own power to save himself is concerned (cf. Eph. 2: 11, 12; Tit. 3: 3-7; and (2) he must be convinced that only Jesus can save him (see John 14: 6; Acts 4: 12).

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What is meant by saying that man was created in the image or likeness of God?
When and under what circumstance did sin first enter the universe?
What was Satan's aim with reference to mankind?
Why has the human race become so sinful?
Tell how sin first entered the human race.

The Golden Text

Under what circumstance were the words of the golden text first used?

What is one of the chief characteristics of the human race with reference to sin?
Why do people want to blame others for their sins?
Why is every individual responsible for his own sin?
Why is it impossible for any human being to live without sin?

Temptation and Disobedience

In what form did the serpent apparently come to Eve?
What does the Bible say about him?
Who or what was the guiding spirit behind him? Give reasons for your answer.
Why did Satan apparently choose the serpent as the tempter?
In what way did the serpent go about de-

ceiving the woman into rebellion against Jehovah?
 How does Satan endeavor to get people to disobey God today? Cite an example.
 Why was the woman such an easy victim for the serpent?
 How did Jesus overcome the temptations of the devil and what are we expected to do about it?
 Why is Satan called the father of lies?
 What are some of the effects of sin, as seen in the world today?

First Payment for Sin Exactod

What happened to the serpent for his part in bringing about the fall of man?
 What immediate steps did Jehovah take with reference to man's redemption?
 What was the curse which was pronounced upon the woman?
 What became the lot of man, as a result of his sin?

Why do so few people apparently realize the truth regarding all of this?
 What name did Adam give to his wife, and why?

The Expulsion from the Garden

Why did God, in his wisdom, expel our foreparents from the garden of Eden?
 What would have happened to the couple, had they continued to have access to the tree of life?
 How do we know that paradise can be regained?
 To what does the way from the closed garden lead?
 What are the central events along the road to the open city?
 In what sense is the city open?
 Who alone has the right to expect to pass through its gates into eternal rest?

Lesson VI—August 10, 1969

THE GRACE OF GOD

Lesson Text

2 Cor. 12: 9; Eph, 2: 1-9; Tit. 2: 11-14

9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for *my* power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

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.—“We shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 15: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 6: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

- August 4. M.....Christ, Source of Grace and Truth (John 1: 14-17)
- August 5. T..... Saved by Grace (Eph. 2: 1-10)
- August 6. W..... Abundant Grace (Eph. 1: 1-7)

August 7. T.....	Grace and Peace from God (Rom. 1: 1-7)
August 8. F.....	Sufficient Grace (2 Cor. 12: 1-9)
August 9. S.....	Grace More Than Sin (Rom. 5: 17-21)
August 10. S.....	Grace for All (Tit. 2: 11-15)

TIME.—A.D. 57-67.

PLACES.—Paul apparently wrote the epistles from Ephesus, Rome, and somewhere in Macedonia, possibly Philippi or Thessalonica.

PERSONS.—Paul and the people to whom he wrote.

Introduction

The subject which we have for consideration at this time, is one about which there is almost unanimous agreement among those who regard the Bible as being the word of God. It would indeed 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, of course, 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 people who are saved, are saved by the grace of God. Any one therefore who realizes the significance of the things which have just been said, is aware of the fact that the subject which is now before us is an extremely important one.

Grace is unmerited favor; it is a benefit bestowed upon one who does not deserve it. Such a blessing is always given without compensation, and there is nothing which the one needing the favor can do to merit it. (Cf. Rom. 4: 4, 5.) If grace therefore were an obligation on God's part, it would no longer be grace. All the recipients of God's grace are sinners, and as such, they deserve to have God against them. God, however, demonstrated his animosity toward sin by the cross; but instead of sending a judge or a destroyer to obliterate the offenders, he sent his Son, to offer them full and complete pardon. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 18-21.) The supreme sacrifice on the part of Christ makes it impossible for any thoughtful person to think of grace as divine indulgence; or, to express the same thing in another way,

grace does not imply the weak and careless forgiveness of sin. This is true because pardon could be effected only by the death of the innocent—the voluntary sacrifice of him who knew no sin. Grace, then, means God's coming to man and providing a way whereby the sinner can return to his Maker; all of which would have been impossible, if Christ had not satisfied the holiness of God, and the demands of divine justice, by dying in the sinner's stead.

Our lesson for today is concerned primarily with that aspect of God's grace, which indicates a favorable disposition on his part, and is a manifestation of that quality of his nature, which is the source of the undeserved blessings which have to do with the forgiveness of sins. And so, as the lesson is applied to us, the sinner needs a blessing which he cannot secure for himself: he needs the forgiveness of his sins, and to be regarded as righteous before God; but the New Testament clearly shows that it is only through God's grace that it is possible for the sinner to have these benefits. It does not make any difference how many things are required of the wrongdoer, by way of "obedience of faith," it always remains true that such acts of obedience do not procure salvation; they are works of faith, by which he accepts salvation. There is nothing which any one can do that will purchase salvation for man. God's grace provided salvation for all, but "faith working through love," accepts salvation. (Titus 2: 11; 3: 5; Gal. 5: 6.)

The Golden Text

"We shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus." The words just quoted are taken from a speech which Peter made at the Je-

rusalem conference, when Paul and Barnabas met with the apostle and elders, in Jerusalem, regarding the circumcising of Gentile Christians,

and requiring them to keep the law of Moses. The full statement of Peter's remarks is as follows: "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they." (See Acts 15: 6-11.)

The "choice" which Peter referred to was his selection by Jesus to have the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16: 19), which meant that he would have the privilege of opening the doors of the kingdom or church to both Jews and Gentiles; or, which is the same thing, the opportunity of preaching the first gospel sermon to both groups. He did that very thing, as may be seen by reading Acts, chapters 2 and 10. Jesus had previously commissioned his apostles to offer salvation to all who obey the gospel plan of salvation (cf. Mark 16: 15, 16); and it is a recorded fact that that was exactly what happened in both of the instances just referred to, as may be

seen by reading Acts 2: 36-41; 10: 44-48; 15: 7.

But Peter ascribes salvation to both Jews and Gentiles to the grace of the Lord Jesus, which can only mean that they were saved by grace, when they heard, believed, and obeyed that which the Lord requires. We know, from the passages just cited, that their reaction to the gospel included faith, repentance, and water baptism; and it follows as clearly as the force of a demonstration that when people hear, believe, and obey the divine requirement they are thereby, so far as their part is concerned, saved by the grace of the Lord, which is his part. When Peter wrote the first letter which is ascribed to him, he said, "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 3: 21.) This was the same baptism which he preached on Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius; and when he came to close this letter, he said that "this is the true grace of God," that is, he had written of the true grace of God, and that included water baptism as an act of obedience, on their part. As we shall see further on in this study, God's grace makes possible our salvation, but it can be appropriated only as we conform to his plan.

The Text Explained

God's Grace Meets Our Every Need

(2 Cor. 12: 9)

And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

This section of the lesson text is taken from Paul's sorrowful letter to the Corinthian brethren, and it was written in defense of his apostolic office and authority which was made necessary because of the false teaching which was being done in Corinth, and the resultant shameful conduct of the Corinthian brethren themselves in turning against their father in the gospel and former teacher, to the extent that Paul was

no longer welcomed among them. The two preceding chapters (2 Corinthians, chapters 10 and 11), presented a contrast between Paul's apostolic labors, and the attitude and activities of the false teachers who had gone to Corinth (cf. 11: 4, 5). Chapter 12 opens with a record of one of the most remarkable experiences on record; and after having related that experience, the apostle felt called upon to tell of another experience, which had the effect of humbling him, following the glorious view of heaven, and he wanted his Corinthian brethren to know that he considered the latter experience as an antidote to pride. The entire context of the passage which serves as the golden text for today's lesson reads as follows:

"And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me. My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

The subject of grace is as broad as the Scriptures, and any one who is acquainted with the teaching of the Bible is aware of the fact that there are many aspects of the grace of God. There is, for example, the gracious attitude which is manifested toward one; and then there is the grace which relates to the over-all process of salvation, as we shall see further on in this study; but the term, as used in this section of the lesson text, carries with it the idea of grace, "possessed of unailing strength" (Thayer, cf. "power" in the latter part of the verse), satisfies every need which the Christian can possibly have. The expression "that the power of Christ may rest upon me" literally says "that the power of Christ may *cover me* or *spread a tabernacle over me*." (see marginal note.)

The original word for "rest" is a compound term, made up of the preposition *epi* (upon) and *skēnoo* (to fix a tent). This is according to Robertson, a bold metaphor, as if the Shekinah of the Lord was overshadowing him (cf. Luke 9: 34). *Episkēnoo* is found nowhere else in the New Testament, but the verb *skēnoo* occurs in John 1: 14; Revelation 7: 15; 12: 12; 13: 6; 21: 3. The first passage in Revelation reads as follows: "Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." Thus, whatever grace

or strength which Paul needed, for any contingency which he might experience, was available to him; for God's grace, which was unailing in its potency, was spread out like a tabernacle over him. (Cf. Heb. 4: 14-16; Phil. 4: 13.)

Salvation Is by Grace through Faith

(Eph. 2: 1-9)

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:— 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: for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory.

The passage just quoted should be read in the light of the preceding paragraph, and especially that which is said about the power of God which raised Christ from the dead, and exalted him above everything in this world and in the world to come; for the same power which did so much for the Lord Jesus Christ, was also exerted in raising the Ephesians from their death in sin and their glorious exaltation: and what was true of the people to whom Paul wrote is also true of every one who becomes a child of God.

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.) "Trespases" are specific acts, that is violations of known laws, commandments, and prohibitions; while "sins" are more general and include all forms and phases of wrongdoing, resulting in a corrupt state of living.

The sinful life to which Paul refers in verse 1 is described somewhat in detail in verses 2 and 3; and it appears that the pronouns "we" and "ye" refer to the Jews and Gentiles, respectively. 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 sinful living on the part of the Gentiles.) The Jews also, according to Paul, were also 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 another way, 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.

Paul, in verse 4, continues the thought which was introduced in verse 1, namely, that all Christians had been raised from death in trespases and sins; and he goes on to show that this salvation from spiritual death was the result of God's unflinching mercy, and in order to satisfy his undying love. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the character of God made an effort to save the lost absolutely essential. It would have been wholly inconsistent with his nature to fail to provide a plan for man's salvation.

To be "alive" is the exact opposite of being "dead," but this life can be experienced only in Christ. (Col. 2: 12, 13.) Paul explains, parenthetically, that our salvation is due to the grace of God, and he further assures us that we are raised up to sit with Christ in heavenly places, that is, where God's blessings are. (Cf. Eph. 1: 3; Phil. 3: 20; Col. 3: 1-4.) This is, of course, the present experience of every faithful child of God. The "ages to come" appar-

ently refer to the successive ages of the Christian dispensation, during which God's grace will be displayed in his actual benefits to his people. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28, 32; Phil. 4: 6, 7, 19; Heb. 13: 5, 6: 1; 1 John 3: 1-3.)

The apostle plainly states that salvation is the gift of God. It was provided, or made possible, by "the grace" (in the original) on God's part, it was received, or appropriated, through faith on man's part. Grace, then, rather than faith, is the ground or *procuring cause of salvation*. (Cf. Heb. 5: 8, 9.) "The grace," as used here by Paul, is equivalent to *the gospel*; and salvation therefore is God's gift to the sinner. But the qualifying phrase "through faith" should 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 for 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.)

The apostle Paul goes on to show that there was nothing which we did, or could do, to provide our salvation; we can only accept by faith that which was made possible by God's grace. "Works," as used in verse 9, refer to *meritorious works*, or works which, in and of themselves, procure the desired end. But the context plainly shows that our salvation did not proceed from ourselves, or from anything which we did; and there is therefore no ground for glorifying or boasting on our part. (Cf. Titus 3: 5, 6; Gal. 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 complete a gift—one to make the offer, and the other to accept it. (Cf. Josh. 6: 2ff; Matt. 22: 1-4; Heb. 5: 8, 9.) And 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, or made new creatures, to do the work which God ordained for them. (Phil. 2: 12, 13.)

The Grace of God Which Brings Salvation and Instructs the Saved

(Titus 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; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior 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.

It has already been pointed out that the grace of God is his merciful kindness, which is extended to sinners; and, as noted here, it is manifested in his Son, who is the embodiment of divine grace which is presented to the human race through the gospel. Therein lies the force of the term "appeared"; the grace of God appeared when the gospel of salvation was proclaimed through Christ. The same original word (render *shone*) is found in Acts 27: 20; the sun and stars existed, but the clouds prevented their being seen. The grace of God, in like manner, was in existence, but it was manifested or came into view with the coming of Christ; just as the sun and stars were seen when the clouds moved away.

As already indicated, we learn from this section of the lesson text 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. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, noted, "Since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth." (Col. 1: 6b.) Luke, in reporting the visit of Barnabas to Antioch, said, "Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad." (Acts 11: 23.) It is possible for people to continue, or stand fast, in the grace of God, as may be seen by the following statement, "Who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God." (Acts 13: 43b.) Peter notes, "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 has appeared, "*bringing salvation to all men.*" This implies that there is no respect of persons with God (cf. Acts 10: 34, 35), and that no man need be lost, insofar as God is concerned. (Cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9.) Provisions therefore have been made for all people; for Christ tasted death for every man. (Heb. 2: 9.)

But the grace of God which brings salvation to the lost 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, namely, (a) "ungodliness," that is, a want of reverence toward God. (Thayer.) There are too many people who fail to show the proper respect 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 the first human pair in the garden of Eden.

The grace of God also teaches (2) the manner in which we should live, namely, (a) "soberly," that is, self-controlled, or fulfilling one's duty toward himself, (b) "Righteously," that is, treating our fellow men as we should. (c) "Godly," that is, showing the proper respect for God. (3) The sphere of our activities—"in this present world." The things which the grace of God teaches us to do constitutes our duty here and now. Verse 12 contains one of the most impressive epitomes of Christianity on record.

The apostle next set forth the incentive to faithful living—looking for that which has been promised at the end of the way. (Cf. 2 Tim. 4: 6-8; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) Verse 14 sets forth the motive which prompted Christ to make the supreme sacrifice for our salvation, and also that which he expects of those who have

been redeemed from the clutches of the evil one. People who have been saved by grace are expected to perform the works which God 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 of today's lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

How do Bible students, generally speaking, feel about the subject of salvation by grace?

What makes this an important question?
What is the fundamental meaning of "grace"?

What particular phase of the subject are we to consider in this study?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text spoken?

What did Peter mean by saying that salvation for both Jew and Gentile is by grace?

Upon what terms was salvation offered to both groups of people at the beginning?

How do we know that salvation today is upon the same basis?

God's Grace Meets Our Every Need

How did Paul come to write the words of this section of the lesson text?

Name and discuss some of the aspects of the over-all subject of the grace of God.

In what sense did Paul use the term when he spoke of the power of Christ resting upon him?

What application does this aspect of the subject have for us?

Salvation Is by Grace through Faith

Why should this section of the lesson text be read in the light of the verses just before it?

What power did God employ in raising sinners from the dead?

What does it mean to be dead through trespasses and sins?

To whom does the teaching of this section of the lesson text apply?

Why did God provide a plan for saving the lost?

Where are the saved "placed" when they are raised from the dead and why?

How does "grace" operate in the lives of God's people?

In what way is salvation the "gift" of God?

Show how God's grace has provided salvation and how by faith man appropriates it.

In what sense is salvation not of works?
How alone can a gift be consummated?

The Grace of God Which Brings Salvation and Instructs the Saved

What does Paul mean by saying that the grace of God has appeared?

What is implied by the term "appeared"?

What are some of the things which the Bible says about the grace of God which appeared?

To whom did this grace bring salvation?
Will all be saved? If not, why not?

In what way does the grace of God teach the saved?

What is the "order" and the "content" of the teaching?

Why is *denying* essential before *living* or *doing*? (Cf. Matt. 16: 24.)

What three relationships are covered in the teaching which the grace of God does?

Does the Christian have any other relationship which is not covered?

What incentive to living is mentioned in the closing verses?

Lesson VII—August 17, 1969

OBEYING GOD

Lesson Text

Matt. 7: 21-27; John 14: 21-24; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

23 And then will I profess unto

them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 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:

25 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.

26 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:

27 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.

21 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.

22 Ju'-das (not Is-car'-i-ot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Je'-sus answered and said unto

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 5: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

August 11. M.....	Destruction to Disobedient (2 Thess. 1: 7-9)
August 12. T.....	Must Do God's Will (1 John 2: 1-6)
August 13. W.....	Christ, Our Example (Heb. 5: 8, 9; 10: 1-7)
August 14. T.....	Following Christ (1 Pet. 2: 21-24)
August 15. F.....	Promise of Blessing (Isa. 1: 16-20)
August 16. S.....	Wise Builder (Matt. 7: 21-27)
August 17. S.....	Destiny of Disobedient (Rev. 22: 13-21)

TIME.—A.D. 27-52.

PLACES.—Probably Mount Hattin, Jerusalem, and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, Paul, and the Thessalonians.

Introduction

Looking at the question from the human point of view, there is no greater subject which could engage our attention at this time, than that of obeying God. Man's greatest possession is his soul, and Jesus asks, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life [soul, King James Version]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life [soul]?" (Matt. 16: 26.) The Bible emphasizes the fact over and over, that only the obedient can be saved; and if one is not saved, nothing else will be of any abiding value to him, whatsoever. Disobedience resulted in the downfall of Adam and Eve, and their alienation from the source of all life; and the same thing has been true of countless millions of people on down through the ages, including our own time.

him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 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.

7 And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Je'-sus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire,

8 Rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Je'-sus:

9 Who shall suffer punishment, *even* eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

And one has only to read the Bible in order to see that the vast majority of people will eventually be lost, because of the sin of disobedience. (Matt. 7: 13, 14.)

The word of God is a perfect standard for this life, and it will also be the standard of judgment at the last day. Jesus, in his last public address before going to the cross, said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak." (John 12: 48-50.) If one

has any intention of pleasing God, he must listen to his word, as revealed through Christ (Heb. 1: 1, 2); and one must obey it and live, or reject it and perish. (Heb. 2: 1-4.) There is no substitute, whatsoever, for obedience. The words which Samuel spoke to the disobedient Saul are still applicable for our day: "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15: 22; cf. Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 6, 11.)

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, one of the latest unabridged works of that nature to be published, defines "obedience" to mean "1. the state or quality of being obedient. 2. the act or practice of obeying; dutiful or submissive compliance." Obedience is

one of the cardinal principles of the Bible. In no age of the world could man please God without obedience. It is necessary therefore that we clearly understand the meaning of the term, if we expect to meet with the Lord's approval in the last day. Nichol and Whiteside, in their book, *Sound Doctrine, Vol. I*, quote Webster as saying, "Obedience, compliance with command, prohibition, or known law and rule of duty prescribed; the performance of what is required or enjoined by authority, or the abstaining from what is prohibited, in compliance with the command or prohibition. To constitute obedience, the act or forbearance to act must be in submission to authority; the command must be known to the person, and the compliance must be in consequence of it, or it is not obedience."

The Golden Text

"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." The four authorities cited above, two in the field of lexicography, and two well known and highly respected Bible students, should be enough to give any honest person some idea of the basic meaning and importance of obedience. Looking at the human race in its present condition, it appears natural for the human will to assert itself, even in early childhood. The little fellow sees a coal of fire, and makes an effort to get it; but he must be taught that he cannot handle such objects without harm to himself. It is, of course, obvious that if such a child does not learn this basic lesson in obedience in his early life, he will, in all probability, soon destroy himself. With these thoughts in mind, it is not difficult for any thoughtful person to see that obedience is something which must be learned. This was true even of God's only begotten Son, as may be seen from the following statement. "Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 8, 9.)

It is possible for one to do some things which God commands men to do, without in the least degree obeying him. For example, he may

act because of the pressure of circumstances; because of some end he seeks to gain, as in a business or social relationship; or because his reason may suggest it as the proper thing to do. But the kind of "obedience" is unacceptable to the Lord, for the Lord, for the simple reason that it is not properly *motivated*. This truth is clearly seen, both from the definitions of obedience given above; and, which is more important, from that which the Bible teaches regarding the subject. Not only must people who obey God act because of what he says; they must also do as he directs because they love him and want, above all things else, to please him. Some one has observed that the thing which counts is, not so much in doing something, but in the manner in which it is done; or, to state the same thing in another way, it is the motive behind the action which is important. This is the idea in the words of Jesus, as expressed in the golden text, namely, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."

Inasmuch as the question of motive is always emphasized in all acts of obedience, it should not be difficult for us to see why God, in all ages of the world, has had some test of obedience, some manner in which he could determine man's loyalty to him. It is easy for us to see why it

is best for us to do some things which God commands; and, while we must be careful to do as he says in all such instances, it is not difficult for us to see that our loyalty to Jehovah is not always actually tested under such circumstances. But if our faith in, or loyalty to, our heavenly Father is to be subjected to an adequate test, then there must

be no apparent connection between the act commanded, and the result promised; and there should be no outside circumstances impelling us. The only moving cause should be our reverence for God, and our devotion to him. This is the lesson which should be emphasized throughout this study.

The Text Explained

Spurious Discipleship and the Need for a Solid Foundation

(Matt. 7: 21-27)

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And, then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

That which is contained in verse 21 may be regarded as a statement of fact. It was doubtless true in the days of Jesus, and it is certainly true in our day, that many people seem to think that it is sufficient to call upon the name of the Lord, and stop there. But Jesus asks, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46.) And then, in a discourse near the close of his ministry, in which he was illustrating, by means of the parable of the virgins, the need for being ready when he comes at the last day, he said, "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." These are the very words which Jesus used in the text now before us, and which he said he would use at the last day; and his prediction is forcefully illustrated by the words addressed to the foolish virgins. (Matt. 25: 11, 12.)

Strict adherence to God's will as a standard, both for profession and conduct, is a principle of discipleship with Jesus, which holds true without exception. A mere profession of loyalty, or even the performance of deeds, however great they may be, will not avail, unless such is

according to the will of God. Even Jesus himself could not please God without doing his will. (Cf. John 5: 30; 6: 38; 8: 29.) If Jesus could not please his heavenly Father without adhering strictly to his will, much less can any human being hope to meet God in peace, who does not endeavor at all times to live as the Lord directs. (Cf. 1 Cor. 4: 6; 2 John 9.)

"That day" evidently refers to the great and terrible day of judgment, when Jesus comes again. (See 2 Tim. 1: 12; 4: 6-8; 2 Thess. 1: 7-10 for a similar use of the expression "that day.") And when the people on that day cry, "Lord, Lord," it will not be the wail of empty professors; for those who will employ the expression had been doing something; and it is fair to assume that they had been doing that which they thought was their duty, or that which would be pleasing to the Lord. Vincent thinks that the negative form indicates that they expected an affirmative answer; while the whole scene pictures both the self-conceit and the self-deception of those addressed by Jesus. The double use of "Lord" probably indicates surprise, as if they will exclaim, "What, Lord? How is this? Are we to be disowned? Surely thou dost know that we have prophesied, etc., by thy name." The threefold repetition of the question, each time in the same form, expresses, in the liveliest manner, the astonishment of the speakers at the attitude of the Lord toward them.

The Lord's final verdict is expressed in verse 23, namely, "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." This verdict includes (1) an open declaration that he had never recognized nor endorsed them as his disciples;

this, notwithstanding their claim of intimacy with him, which was all the worse for them; for they could have known better, and should have done better. (Cf. Luke 19: 22, 23; Gal. 1: 6-9.) (2) A command to depart from him. (Cf. Matt. 25: 41, 46.) It will be a terrible thing to hear those awful words! (3) A reason for the verdict: "ye that work iniquity."

The term "iniquity," according to Thayer, describes "the condition of one without law—either because ignorant of it, or because violating it." (Cf. Luke 12: 47, 48; 1 John 3: 4. The term "lawlessness is from the same original word, as is the word "iniquity.") Thayer further notes that the original term for "iniquity" also means contempt for and violation of law; but it is evidently in the first sense given by the lexicographer that the term "iniquity" is used in the passage now before us. The aim of the people about whom Jesus speaks is not wickedness, in contrast with righteousness (cf. 2 Cor. 6: 14); they simply acted without the Lord's authority, that is, his law, whether intentional or not. This lesson should be thoroughly understood by every one.

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.

Every responsible hearer is, in the sight of Jesus, a builder; and it is here that the Lord emphasizes the supreme importance of the foundation upon which the building rests. Furthermore, he points out that the day of testing is not one of sunshine, but of tempest and storm. The wise builder has no need for fear; for these who build upon the word of Christ, will find that their structure will remain unmoved; while those who build upon other foundations,

will discover, to their dismay, that that which they erect will be swept away. Those who build upon the teaching of Jesus are building for eternity, and there is no power which can destroy that which they construct.

A Criterion Which Never Fails

(John 14: 21-24)

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

This section of the lesson text is taken from the Lord's last discourse with his disciples, just before his betrayal, arrest, trial, condemnation, and execution. His loyalty to his heavenly Father, and his love for his disciples, led him to speak exactly that which they needed to hear. Again and again, Jesus stressed the need for them to listen to his word, and he repeatedly emphasized the fact that they would have to be properly motivated, if they remained faithful to him; and he stressed the truth that the greatest possible motivation is that of love. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14:

15.) Years later, the apostle John echoed this idea, and recorded these significant words: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.) Thus, when professed followers of Christ find it difficult, or burdensome, to do that which Jesus requires, they should know at once that their love for him is not which it should be.

Although he occupied an inconspicuous place among the disciples of Christ, that is, the twelve apostle, that fact did not keep Judas from

asking a question which furnished the occasion for the basic teaching which Jesus did on the last night he spent with them. The disciples had evidently expected their Master to manifest himself to the world, as well as to his own followers; but it became clear, at least to Judas, that that was not to be the way of the matter. But it is a noticeable fact that, when Jesus came to reply to that question, he cast his answer in an impersonal form, namely, "If a *man* [that is, any one] 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." This language clearly shows that the divine manifestation would not be to the apostles only, but to *any one* who complies with the conditions of the promise. In fact, no one, not even the apostles, should be permitted to share in his manifestation, except those who love him, and keep his word.

The *word* to which Jesus referred does not, of course, mean a single commandment, but to all of his teaching, as set forth in his will; or, which is the same thing, the New Testament. (Cf. Matt. 28: 20; Acts 2: 42; 2 John 9.) No man, who really loves the Lord, would so much as think of going through his revealed will, and choosing the commandments which he wants to keep; instead, he will make an effort to learn, and then put into practice, that which Jesus has ordained through his inspired messengers. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 2.) Thus, in one short statement, the Lord Jesus has put into words the conditions of divine manifestation.

The conditions just referred to are love and obedience. Obedience alone is not enough; there must be loving obedience. Or, to state the same thing in another way, one must do that which the Lord commands, because he loves to do that which will please the Lord. It is in this kind of a situation that the devil tries to deceive people, and thereby cause them to fail in meeting with the Lord's approval. "And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming; even he, whose coming is according to the working

of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2: 8-12.)

It may well be said that loving obedience is the very pulse of life. The universe itself is governed by law, but only those people and those things which are governed by law are truly benefited. And as already indicated, the source of true obedience is love; or, which is the same thing, all acceptable obedience must be motivated by love. (Cf. Matt. 22: 35-40.) Love may be described as the hidden fountain, while obedience is the visible stream. There is no love, worthy of the name, which does not obey; and, conversely, there is no such thing as true obedience, which is not motivated by love.

It is in such a situation, as that just described, that the Lord delights to dwell. The religion of Christ represents God as returning to the hearts of the people who are reconciled to him through Christ. (2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) And the practical meaning of the section of the text now under consideration is that the Father and the Son come to, and dwell with, those who love and obey them. "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.)

The language of the text we are now considering makes in abundantly clear that the Divine Presence will not be temporary. As long as loving obedience continues, just that long will the Father and the Son remain. (Eph. 2: 19-22.) The original word for "above" is *monē*; it is the very same term which is used for "mansions" (abiding-places, margin) in John 14: 2. It is therefore a permanent abode, so long as the conditions are fulfilled; 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 (cf. Eph. 2: 1-7); and should inspire us with a greater determination to make their abode with us pleasing to them. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19, 20.)

The Coming of Christ As Vindicator and Judge

(2 Thess. 1: 7-9)

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.

It is easy to see that Paul's purpose, as seen by the over-all context, was to comfort the Thessalonian brethren in the midst of their bitter persecution. "We are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patients and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: if so be that it

is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you." (2 Thess. 1: 3-6.)

The "rest" which Paul referred to in verse 7 is the relief or relaxation which will be the portion of those, along with the apostles, who have been afflicted and persecuted. God, throughout the entire Bible, is described as the Avenger of all wrongdoing and mistreatment; and Jesus plainly states in the Sermon on the Mount, the attitude which his people should manifest toward persecution. (Matt. 5: 10-12; Luke 6: 22, 23.) If the Lord's people will be true to him, they will have nothing to fear, either here or hereafter.

Something of the manner in which divine vengeance will be measured out is set forth in the section of the lesson text now before us. The Lord will come from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire; and there will be no escape for any one who merits eternal punishment. These people are described as those who know not God (John 17: 3), and those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. When Jesus authorized the gospel to be preached (Mark 16: 15, 16), he indicated the only two reaction which any one can manifest toward it; and it would be difficult, yea, impossible, for any one to show how one can fail to obey the gospel, other than by refusing to do that which the Lord commands. (Gal. 1: 6-9; Acts 22: 10, 16; Gal. 3: 26, 27.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of today's lesson?

Repeat the «olden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

Why is this such an important lesson?

What does the Bible teach regarding the final outcome of disobedience?

How may one know whether or not he is obeying the Lord?

What is the basis or fundamental meaning of the term "obedience"?

The Golden Text

When and how must obedience be learned?

Why is it possible for one to do what God says without obeying him?

Why, then, is the question of motive so important?

Spurious Discipleship and the Need for a

Solid Foundation

What is the nature of the statement found in Matthew 7: 21 and its importance to us?

What kind of standard is used to measure one's profession and actual deeds?

What does the New Testament teach with reference to the obedience of Christ himself?

What does the expression "that day" in the text refer to and how do we know?

Who are some of the people who will cry, Lord, Lord, on that day?

What does Jesus say his final verdict will be on that day?

What is involved in that verdict?

What is the fundamental meaning of the term "iniquity," as used in this text?

Who, then, are the workers of iniquity, referred to by Jesus?

Why is this such an important lesson?

What does Jesus teach with reference to a foundation for a building?

A Criterion Which Never Fails

What is the general setting of this portion of the lesson text?

What is the criterion which never fails?

How may professed followers of Christ test the strength of their love for him?

What was the occasion for the teaching of Christ in this section of the lesson text?
 How did Jesus go about replying to the question which Judas asked?
 To what "word" did the Lord have reference?
 What should be the attitude of the Lord's people toward his revealed will?
 What are the essential conditions which must be met, if one would have the Lord dwell with him?

What is a good way to describe loving obedience?
 How long will the Father and the Son dwell with a person?
 The Coming of Christ As Vindicator and Judge
 What was Paul's purpose in writing this portion of the lesson text?
 To what "rest" did he make reference?
 Upon what basis will people be punished at the last great day?

Lesson VIII—August 24, 1969

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Lesson Text

Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 37, 38; Rom. 6: 1-6; 10: 9, 10

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

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Je'-sus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?

3 Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Je'-sus were baptized into his death?

4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have become united with *him* in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection;

6 Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin.

9 Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Je'-sus *as* Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death."* (Rom. 8: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 8: 1-11.

Daily Bible Readings

August 18. M..... Faith (John 8: 21, 24; Heb. 11: 1-6)
 August 19. T..... Repentance (Luke 13: 1-5; 2 Pet. 3: 1-9)
 August 20. W..... Confession (Rom. 10: 9, 10)
 August 21. T..... Baptism (Acts 22: 16; 1 Pet. 3: 21)
 August 22. F..... Blessings of the Faithful (Psalm 27: 1-5)
 August 23. S..... Submission of Will (Matt. 7: 21-27)
 August 24. S..... Christian Growth (2 Pet. 3: 18)

TIME.—A.D. 30-58.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the apostles; Peter and the multitudes; Paul and the Romans.

Introduction

When we consider the Lord's plan of saving the lost we are, in fact, dealing with the commission which he gave to his disciples, during the period between his resurrection and ascension; for he has no other plan which is designed to accomplish that purpose. Those who read the brotherhood publications are aware of the discussion which was carried on sometime past, regarding the alleged difference between the "man" and the "plan." Jesus is indeed the Saviour of the race, but he also has a plan for the accomplishment of that objective; and when his people make a sincere effort to follow that plan, and put into motion that which he ordained, their work will never be in vain. (Cf. Isa. 55: 10, 11.)

The divine plan for saving the lost, that is, the charge which we know as the great commission, is referred to several times in the New Testament; but the greatest number of details are contained in the Synoptic Gospels, one of which is to be considered in this study. We have no way to be absolutely certain about the matter, but it is thought by many able Bible students that Mark was the earliest of the gospel narratives. But whether that is true or not, it is well for the student to become familiar with that which Matthew, Mark, and Luke say about the Lord's plan for bringing the lost to him; and then study along with their records that which John (20: 21-23) and Paul (2 Cor. 5: 18-20) say about the subject. There are, of course, many, many references to the Lord's commission in the New Testament Scriptures, as may be

seen in every recorded case of conversion. One of the primary reasons why all of the information regarding the plan for saving the lost is not found in a single place, is that Jesus frequently spoke to his disciples about the matter; and when the writers of the New Testament came to record their versions of it, one wrote concerning one phase of it, while another wrote about some other aspect of the question.

Not only was the plan for the salvation of the world carefully given by the Lord, it was put into operation under the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 4); and if we are willing to make a thorough investigation regarding the whole issue, we will have before us all that we need to know about what the Lord expects of his people. We are further warned that the Saviour of men will not allow any change whatsoever to be made in that which was originally declared concerning the question now before us, as may be seen by reading Galatians 1: 6-9. No one therefore has the right to preach anything which differs from the original preaching, and no one is permitted to offer as obedience anything which is not required in the words of Jesus and the inspired men who recorded his will. And as we continue our study of the question now before us, we will see that not only was the plan of salvation divinely given; it is also divinely perpetuated. "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2: 2.)

The Golden Text

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death" The entire eighth chapter of Romans is taken up with the superior advantages of sonship, which are open to the believer, that is, the obedient believer, in Christ. If one will go back and read the closing part of chapter 6, and all of chapter 7, he will see that the believer, although freed from the legal yoke of the former dispensation, he is, nevertheless, obligated to meet the demands of the new supremacy, or, which is

the same thing, the demands of righteousness. This point is illustrated by the apostle, thusly, (1) by the figure of transferring slaves from one master to another, (6:

15-23; cf. verses 16-18); and (2) by the marriage relationship (7: 1-6). Paul next shows something of the purpose of the law of Moses, and its relation to sin (7: 7-25), under the following heads, namely, (1) although good within itself, the law brought the occasion for, and the possibility of, sin, (7: 7-13); and (2) a description of the struggle

within the sinner, from which only Christ can deliver (7: 14-25).

And so, with that background in mind, the apostle notes that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." To be in Christ Jesus is to be in his church (Eph. 1: 22, 23); and both Paul (Eph. 3: 10, 11) and Jesus (Matt. 16: 18) make it clear that the church is vital to the implementation of the divine plan of salvation. Paul next shows, in the words of the golden text, how the Lord's people came out from under condemnation: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." And so, after stating that fact, the apostle records the reason which was behind it, namely, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8: 3, 4; cf. Acts 13: 38, 39.)

The "law of the Spirit" is but another name for the gospel, called

also a "law of faith" in Romans 3: 27. The apostle had already said, in his letter to the Romans (1: 16, 17), that the gospel is God's power unto salvation to every one who believes; and Peter declares that "his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises: that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Pet. 1: 3, 4.) James Denny points out that "Sin and Death are conceived objectively as powers which impose their own law on unredeemed men." (See again Rom. 7: 23.) The "law of sin and of death" cannot refer to the law of Moses, as such; for that law, in and of itself, was good. (Read again Rom. 7: 9-14.) Sin, which was personified, simply used the law of the previous dispensation to bring about its work of death and destruction.

The Text Explained

The Plan of Salvation Made Known

(Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 37, 38)

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.

The writer of Hebrews (2: 9) notes that Christ tasted death for every man; and that, of course, means every responsible person who has lived, is now living, or will live here upon the earth. Both Paul and Peter make it plain that the Lord does not want any one to be lost (see 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9); and these are the reasons why Jesus commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature. It is both interesting and encouraging to observe that this very thing was done within the short period of approximately thirty years, following the giving of the commission, as may be seen by reading Colossians 1: 23.

The conditions of salvation, as set forth by Jesus and his inspired

apostles, are simple enough to be understood without comment, if people would only listen to the divine record, rather than to those who insist that baptism is not essential to the remission of alien sins. (Cf. Gal. 1: 6-9; 3: 26, 27; Eph. 1: 22, 23.) When Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, he began it with a ringing statement regarding the proper attitude which one should, and must, have toward the gospel. In verses 6, 7 of the passage just cited, we have, according to Goodspeed's translation, 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 there are some people who are trying to unsettle you and want to turn the good news of the Christ around." This is exactly what is being done today, as may be seen by comparing the commission, as given by Christ in the text now under consideration, with the present-day teaching of men.

The parting words of Jesus, as

contained in the text now before us, made Christianity a universal religion; not merely in the sense that it should be available to all who might come to seek it, but universal in that its adherents should go out and seek new disciples wherever men are found—in their homes, places of business, or wherever they may chance to be. Such a religion is one of conquest and progress in all directions, a religion which can never be satisfied as long as a single individual is unsaved. The words of Christ which we are now considering were the guiding principle of Paul, in all of his great work; and when he was about ready to lay his armor down, he passed them on to his son in the faith, and through him to all men who are devoted to Christ. (2 Tim. 2: 2; 4: 1-5.)

Verse 16 in the text now under consideration, contains a compound-complex declarative sentence, with two principal clauses and each with a subordinate clause. The first principal clause is "He . . . shall be saved," and its subject (he) is modified or limited by the subordinate clause "that believeth and is baptized." Only *that* "he" is promised salvation by the Lord, that is, the *he* that believes and is baptized. The other principal clause is "he . . . shall be condemned," and it is modified or limited by the subordinate clause "that disbelieveth," or, which is the same thing, the "he" who does not believe shall be condemned. In each case the principal clause is restricted by a subordinate clause, which identifies the subject of the principal declaration. Furthermore, the fact that "believeth" and "is baptized" are joined by the coordinate conjunction forever settles the fact that both are essential to salvation. The first part of the total sentence presents the positive side of the subject, while the latter part gives the negative side of the proposition. The salvation of the text is the salvation referred to by Paul in Hebrews 2: 1-3, and confirmed unto us by them who heard the Lord speak. (Cf. Mark 16: 19, 20; Heb. 2: 4.)

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, 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.

The original word for "pricked" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; and its practical meaning is the painful emotional sting, which the words of Peter produced in their hearts. Figuratively, they were cut to the heart, or were profoundly disturbed in their conscience; all of which implies that they believed that which Peter had spoken with reference to Christ. Or, which is the same thing, they realized their guilt, in respect to Jesus, and they cried out for relief from their terrible transgression. Faith is a change of mind with reference to Christ; and it was, as is always the case, brought about by the word of God. (Cf. Rom. 10: 17; Acts 2: 4.)

Verse 38 is rendered by Goodspeed in these words: "Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to have your sins forgiven; then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The original word for "unto" (*eis*) is the same word which is translated "unto" in Matthew 26: 28. There can therefore be no doubt about the design of baptism, as Peter stated the proposition, "in order to have your sins forgiven."

It is possible, of course, that the people who asked the question about what they should do (verse 37), only had in mind what they should do about getting rid of the guilt which resulted from the killing of Jesus; but it is hardly probable, after listening to Peter's sermon, that they failed to realize their undone condition before God. But at any rate, Peter took the wider view, and told them how to get the forgiveness they needed; and what was said to them is equally applicable to alien sinners throughout the Christian dispensation.

The Place of Baptism in the Plan of Salvation

(Rom. 6: 1-6)

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all

we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin.

When one studies a given passage of scripture, he should endeavor to see it in the light of its context; or, to state the same thing in another way, one can better understand a given passage better, if he will try to look at it as a part of the whole book or letter. As Paul was reaching the closing part of his introduction of the letter to the Romans, he penned a statement of the fundamental thesis of the epistle, which is contained in Romans 1: 16, 17. This clearly shows that the gospel contains God's plan of righteousness, which enables him to look upon obedient believers, as if they had never sinned. And then, after showing the need for such a plan (Rom. 1: 18-3: 20), the apostle discusses the divine side of the plan in the remainder of chapter 3, and on through chapter 5.

It is in the light of the discussion just referred to that we must understand the significance of the questions at the beginning of chapter 6. This was Paul's way of directing the attention of his readers to the human side of the plan of salvation. Or, to say the same thing in another way, Paul now proposes to show the manner in which the righteousness of the gospel is to be realized by the sinner; and this is done in great detail in chapters 6-8. If the righteousness of the plan of salvation does not become real in the life of the believer, then all the efforts of the divine side will be in vain. (Cf. Gal. 2: 21; Eph. 2: 8-10; Phil. 2: 12, 13.) When the sinner learns of his true condition, he will, if he sincerely wants to please God, die to sin; and when that happens, he will no longer continue to live a life of sin. (Cf. 1 John 3: 9.)

Burial is the natural sequence of death, and a kind of seal of its reality; for only the dead are buried. Baptism therefore, which is both immersion and emersion, is the symbol of burying a dead body, and of raising it to a new life; and it is for this reason that baptism is directly related to the three fundamental facts of the gospel. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) The sinner must die, just as Jesus did, before he is buried; and after his burial, he must be raised up to a new life, in keeping with the experience of our Lord. William Sanday notes that "all these the Christian has to undergo in a moral and spiritual sense, and by means of his union with Christ. As Christ by his death on the cross ceased from all contact with sin, so the Christian, united with Christ in his baptism, has done once for all with sin and lives henceforth a reformed life dedicated to God."

God's glory was manifested when Christ was raised from the dead; and it is by that same power that sinners are raised up from their spiritual death. (Read Eph. 1: 19-2: 1. The term "newness," which is used to indicate the life of a Christian, is a stronger expression than a *new life*. The word, according to Arndt-Gingrich, has the connotation of something extraordinary—that of a new quality of life. Kittel notes that where there is a new creature, or creation, law and sin are left behind. The Spirit is the completely different force which determines the new life. (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. III, p. 451.) When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he referred to this newness of life as a new creature, or a new creation. (See 2 Cor. 5: 17; cf. Tit. 3: 5; Gal. 2: 20.) We are united with Christ in both his death and resurrection, both of which implies the destruction of the body of sin, so that our bondage to that cruel master comes to an end.

Confession and the Lord's Plan for Saving the Lost

(Rom. 10: 9, 10)

Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and

with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

It is a noticeable fact that a *formal* confession is nowhere referred to in any account of the Lord's commission to his disciples, nor in any record which tells of people's accepting the Lord's plan of salvation; but any fair-minded student of the Bible will have to admit that a confession of one's faith is implied before he can be accepted as a true believer. No one has the right to baptize a person, until he is satisfied that that person believes that Jesus is the Christ; and the natural and most direct way for a candidate for baptism to make known the condition of his heart regarding his faith in Jesus, is with his mouth. If the eunuch of Acts 8, for example, had told Philip that he believed in Christ and would like to be baptized, there would have been no reason for the preacher to ask the candidate again about his faith; but when the latter asked about being baptized, it was necessary that Philip inquire regarding his faith.

The section of the lesson text which are we now considering is a part of Paul's explanation as to why Israel, as the chosen people, were rejected. (Rom. 9: 1-11: 36 is de-

voted to that subject.) The immediate context, Romans 10; 1-15, has Paul telling his readers that the righteousness which the Jews had missed does not involve any painful search or laborious effort on the part of those who desire it. Christ has already accomplished all that is essential to salvation; and all that is necessary on the part of the lost is to accept by faith that which the gospel declares, instead of the long and painful, as well as the futile way of trying to establish their own righteousness by trying to obey the law. The two essential things, so far as people are concerned, are faith in the heart and confession with the mouth. Faith, of course, is to be understood in its comprehensive sense, that of putting into action that which is required of the believer. The term "confess" literally means to say the same thing. God says that Christ is his Son, and when one confesses his faith in the Lord he simply says the same thing. Those who are familiar with the New Testament are aware of the fact that Christians frequently have the opportunity of confessing their faith in Jesus. (Cf. 2 Cor. 9: 13; Heb. 10; 23; 13; 15.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

What is really meant by the divine plan of salvation?

Why is it essential that there be a plan?

Where can we learn of the details of the Lord's plan for saving the lost?

What is the Lord's attitude toward any changes in his plan of salvation?

What does the New Testament teach with reference to the perpetuation of the plan?

The Golden Text

What is the general setting of the golden text for today's lesson?

In what way does the church figure in the Lord's plan for saving the lost?

What is meant by the law of the Spirit?

The Plan of Salvation Made Known

Why does the plan of salvation make possible the redemption of all the lost?

How did the early church regard the Lord's commission and with what result?

Why is there so much confusion about the conditions of salvation?

How do we know about how the apostles went about preaching the word?

In what way, have some people tried to turn the Lord's plan around?

How do we know that Christianity is a

universal religion and what should we do about it?

What does a grammatical analysis of Mark 16: 16 reveal regarding the Lord's will?

How do we know that baptism is indeed a condition of salvation?

What did Luke mean by saying that the people who heard Peter were "pricked" in their heart?

What question did they ask and what answer did Peter give them?

The Place of Baptism in the Plan of Salvation

What is the most effective way to study a given passage of scripture?

If that plan is followed with reference to this section of the lesson text what will be the result?

Why did Paul ask the questions in the first part of chapter 6?

What was his purpose in discussing baptism at this point?

Why, then, is baptism so essential in the Lord's plan of saving the lost?

What happens to the penitent sinner who is buried with Christ in baptism?

What is the meaning of "newness" of life?

What relation does the "new creature" in Christ sustain toward sin?

Confession and the Lord's Plan for Saving the Lost

What does the New Testament teach with

reference to a formal confession of one's faith in Christ before baptism? Give reasons for your answer?
 Why is it essential that a confession of one's faith in Christ be made before baptism?
 Under what circumstance did Paul write

the words of this section of the lesson text?
 What great mistake had the Jews made with reference to the Lord's plan of salvation?
 What were the two essential things which they had missed?

Lesson IX—August 31, 1969

A CASE 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 E-thi-o'-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 shear-er 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 the eunuch . . . went on his way rejoicing."* (Acts 8: 39.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 8: 1-25.

Daily Bible Readings

August 25. M. Philip in Samaria (Acts 8: 5-12)
 August 26. T. Gospel to Be Preached (Mark 16: 15, 16)
 August 27. W. Gospel to All (Matt. 28: 18-20)
 August 28. T. Conversion a Turning (Acts 3: 19-21)
 August 29. F. "Ye Turned unto God from Idols" (1 Thess. 1: 8-10)
 August 30. S. Turn from Vain Things (Acts 14: 11-18)
 August 31. S. The Eunuch Became a Christian (Acts 11: 26)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 33.

PLACE.—On the road between Jerusalem and Gaza.

PERSONS.—The Holy Spirit, an angel, Philip, and the eunuch.

Introduction

It is easy, for those who are interested in the subject, to find the New Testament teaching regarding the Lord's plan of saving the lost; or, which is the same thing, the manner in which people are converted to God. The entire Bible is ours, and it is important that we know its message as a whole; but there are some very special reasons why we should understand the New Testament. (1) It is addressed to people of this dispensation; (2) it is God's final word to man—cf. Heb. 1: 1, 2; 12: 25-29; (3) it is in the New Testament that the way of salvation is made known through Christ—cf. Heb. 2: 1-4; and (4) mankind has some definite needs which must be met, before any one can hope to dwell with God for ever; and inasmuch as the New Testament is addressed to people of this age, it is both natural and reasonable to expect to find the needed information in this part of God's revelation to the human race.

It is also safe to assume that the New Testament, as God gave it, is adapted to man's heart, as God made it; and so, with this thesis before us, let us endeavor to learn something about how man can be led back to his Maker. It is, of course, difficult to find a person who does not have some idea about God and the Bible. But, in order to make the case as clear as possible, let us suppose that a man comes to our shores who has never heard of either; and upon hearing some one mention the subject of eternal life, he immediately becomes interested, and expresses a desire to learn how he might obtain that blessing. Some one who understands the questions presents the man a copy of the New Testament, and bids him read it for himself. With this kind of a situation, it will not be difficult for one to see just how the New Testament meets every basic need which any human being has, and not only that, but it meets the needs in the order of their occurrence.

The first need which any one has with reference to the salvation of his soul, whether he has previously heard of the subject or not, is to learn of the Savior. We know, of course, that salvation is found in Christ, and in him alone (cf. 2 Tim. 2: 10; Acts 4: 12); and when one begins to read the New Testament, the first information which he receives is with reference to Christ, as the Savior of men. (Cf. Matt. 1: 21; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 19: 10; John 20: 30, 31.) And so, when one finishes the reading of the Gospel Narratives, he will have learned the basic truths of the Divine Being who claims to be both willing and able to save any and all from sin, who really want to be saved. (Cf. Heb. 7: 25.)

When one learns of the Savior, his next need is to know something about the manner in which the Saviour proposes to save one; and it is in the Book of Acts that that information is found. It is true, as we have just seen, that the Lord's commission to his disciples was given just before he returned to his Father; but the details of the Lord's plan of salvation is not to be found in the Gospel Records. But when one turns to the second grand division of the New Testament, that is, the Book of Acts, he not only learns what one must do to be saved; he sees the question illustrated by a fairly large number of examples—in some cases just an individual, while in others several—of people who became the recipients of the Lord's salvation. The third section, the Epistles, shows how the need for living the Christian life may be satisfied. Man's final need is related to his question regarding the future, and this is satisfied in the closing book of the New Testament, the section which deals with the struggles and final triumph of the Lord's people or, which is the same thing, the church.

The Golden Text

This portion of today's lesson is found in the principal text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

The Text Explained

How the Preacher and the Man Who Needed Salvation Were Brought Together

(Acts 8: 26-31)

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. 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. And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 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 shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

A great persecution was raised against the church in Jerusalem, following the death of Stephen; and the disciples, except the apostles, fled from the city, and went about preaching the word. These early disciples were thoroughly grounded in the truth, and the time apparently had come when they should go out into the regions adjacent to Jerusalem and Judaea, and preach the gospel to those people. This was in keeping with the plan referred to by Jesus in Acts 1: 8, when he said, "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." Philip was one of the seven men who were appointed to serve tables (Acts 6), but he, like Stephen, had developed into an effective gospel preacher; and it is his work which is singled out in Samaria (Acts 8: 4-24), which apparently took place shortly before the time of this lesson.

Although not the first case of conversion, after the brethren were driven out of Jerusalem, nor even the first in the ministry of Philip (see the passage in Acts just referred to), the conversion of the eunuch is the case which received

the fullest attention by Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts. The details of a picture often are the means by which the writer endeavors to focus the attention of the reader upon the subject as a whole. And if this fact is taken into consideration here, one will be able to see that the case of conversion now under consideration was the "work of four," namely, the angel, the Holy Spirit, Philip, and the eunuch.

The Bible has much to say about angels and the work which is given them to do; and when one reads all that is said in the Scriptures about angels, he will see that the fundamental meaning of the term is that of a messenger, whether the reference is to celestial or human beings. But the angel of the text now before us was evidently a heavenly being, and he will be so considered in this lesson. Time and space will not permit a discussion of the subject of angels, but it is interesting to note a remark which the writer of Hebrews makes about them. After showing that the Son of God is superior to angels, the inspired penman asks, "But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1: 13, 14.) The case now before us is evidently an example of that kind of service.

The angel's instruction to Philip was clear and specific; and it should be noted that he spoke only to the preacher. His words were, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert." Philip apparently was in the city of Samaria, when the angel spoke to him (Acts 8: 5-25); and if so, he was some thirty-six miles north of Jerusalem. Philip was instructed to travel "toward the south," unto the road which connected Jerusalem with the town of Gaza, which was southwest of the Jewish capital, and near the seacoast. Samaria was almost due north of Jerusalem, and if one will draw a line from Jerusalem to Gaza, and then a line from Samaria which will reach the line

from Jerusalem to Gaza, he will have a very good idea of the direction which Philip travelled from Samaria to the place where he saw the chariot of the eunuch. We do not know, of course, just how far from Jerusalem the eunuch had travelled, when Philip saw the vehicle.

The "desert" to which Luke makes reference was probably the uninhabited section of the country through which the road from Jerusalem to Gaza passed. The principle reason for mentioning the matter here is due to the fact that some people, who are opposed to water baptism as a condition of salvation, try to make it appear that no such body of water, sufficient to bury a man in, could be found in the region where the word of God says that it existed. The original word for "desert" is *eremos*, the identical term from which *wilderness* is translated in Luke 15: 4, where the shepherd was evidently pasturing his sheep. It is clear from Mark 6: 30-39 that a "desert place" could have *green grass*; and that, of course, implies that it was not a barren waste, with no water supply: it was simply uninhabited.

Philip promptly obeyed the voice of the angel; and when he reached the designated road, he saw the man whom Luke describes in the text now before us. The eunuch was either a Jew or a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and he was what we would call the Secretary of the Treasury, in the government which he served. The original word for "Candace" is *Kandake*, which Thayer says was "a name common to the queens of a region of Ethiopia whose capital was Napata; just as the proper name *Ptolemy* was common to the Egyptian kings."

The eunuch now in question had been to Jerusalem to worship, probably during one of the annual feasts of the Jews. The fact that he was «a "eunuch" would keep him from entering the "assembly of Jehovah" (cf. Deut. 23: 1), but it would not prevent his entering the court of the Gentiles, where men from all nations, both clean and unclean, might worship God. (Cf. 1 Kings 8: 41-43; Matt. 21: 12-16.) And too, the fact that the eunuch was reading his Bible was indicative of his frame of mind; but when Philip reached the

road where the man from Ethiopia was travelling, he did not know that he was supposed to contact that particular individual: he had simply done all the angel commanded him to do.

This brings us to the second "actor" in the drama now before us, namely, the Holy Spirit; and his part in the "work of four" is told by Luke in one short sentence, namely, "And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." That which is said here about the work of the Holy Spirit is in marked contrast with the popular denominational teaching on the subject today. It is easy to see, based on the inspired record, that the Holy Spirit did not tell Philip to do anything else; for he knew that when once a man of Philip's evangelistic zeal came face to face with a situation like this, that he would preach Jesus to the man. That was exactly what Philip had been doing in Samaria. (Cf. Acts 8: 5.)

It is also a noticeable fact that the Holy Spirit did not say a single word to the man who needed Christ; and there is no evidence whatsoever that the Spirit brought any miraculous powers, of any kind, to bear upon him. The Spirit's part in the drama now before us, like that of the angel, was to get the preacher and the man who needed salvation together. There is not an example, in fact, in the entire New Testament which portrays the Holy Spirit, or any one else representing the divine side of the question, as dealing directly with the unsaved person, in an effort to convert him. This brings us to the end of the work which was done by the agents of the Lord's side in the conversion of the eunuch; and we shall next consider

The Work of the Preacher

(Acts 8: 32-35)

*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.

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.

It is well to keep in mind the fact that Philip was not an apostle, in the sense that the twelve and Paul were. He, along with Stephen and five other men, had been selected to minister to the needy in the Jerusalem church; but like Stephen, as already indicated, his service went beyond the service of tables. Philip, along with practically the entire church, except the apostles, was driven out of the city of Jerusalem by the persecution, which began by the martyrdom of Stephen. There is no indication that any of the fleeing Christians harbored any malice for their persecutors (cf. Matt. 5: 10-12; Luke 6: 22, 23); instead, they "went about preaching the word." The only specific preaching which Luke mentions, which was done by the scattered disciples, as previously stated, was that which was done by Philip. He is called the "evangelist" in Acts 21: 8, which means that he was a herald of the gospel message, that is, the gospel message which was made known through the apostles. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6-10; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.)

We have already seen that Philip promptly obeyed the instruction of the angel and the Holy Spirit; and it is easy for one to observe something of the zeal which characterized him, as he beholds him running to the chariot, in which the eunuch was riding. When Philip reached the carriage, he heard the eunuch reading the prophet Isaiah; and upon being asked if he understood that which he was reading the eunuch politely replied, "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" The attitude which was manifested by the eunuch clearly indicates that he did not consider Philip's question either improper or impolite. It is never difficult for the teacher of God's word, and the one who needs the salvation which Christ has to offer, to get together, when they both manifest the sincerity which

characterized the two men now before us.

The eunuch was reading from that which was known as the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Many Bible students think that the book which bears Isaiah's name was written by two or more authors, and they usually speak of the contents of the book as First Isaiah (meaning the prophet now under consideration), chapters 1-39; Second or Deutero Isaiah, chapters 40-55; and Third Isaiah, chapters 56-66. Other such students speak of only First and Second Isaiah, thus combining Second and Third Isaiah into a single book. This, of course, can be confusing to those who have always thought of the Book of Isaiah as being a literary unit. *The People's Bible Encyclopædia* makes the following observation, which should be carefully read, namely, "'The vision of Isaiah,' etc., has never been applied to the whole book; that a second part has never been known to exist separately; that if separated those who joined them believed that they were both from Isaiah's pen; that a second Isaiah is unknown in history; that so far from a fatal diversity of style there is a striking similarity of idea and expression in the two parts; that Christ and the apostles, who frequently quote the prophets, never once suggested the idea of two Isaiahs; that no other satisfactory explanation of the admitted relationship of the two Isaiahs can be given than that of identity." Christ and the apostles quoted from all three of the so-called sections of Isaiah; but never once did either of them give the slightest indication that the same prophet did not speak or write the entire book. (Cf. Matt. 13; 14, 15—Isa. 6; 9, 10; Matt. 3: 3—Isa. 40; 3; Luke 4: 17-19—Isa. 61; 1-3.)

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah portrays the suffering Servant of Jehovah, that is, Christ; and it was from that section of the prophecy that the eunuch was reading, when Philip approached him; and it would be both natural and easy for the evangelist to begin with that scripture, and preach unto him Jesus. And if one should ask about what it means to preach Jesus to some one else, the answer would be something like this: He would tell

of the Lord's coming into the world, and of the principal events of his life here upon the earth, climaxing them with his death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he said, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2: 2.) And the apostle further says that that was what he did preach unto them. (See 1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, according to the scriptures, are the fundamental facts of the gospel; and no one can preach Jesus who does not emphasize them.

When one preaches Jesus, he also sets forth the provisions which the Lord has made, in order that men may enjoy the salvation which he has made possible for them; or, which is the same thing, he tells how men may appropriate to themselves the Lord's saving grace. (See Tit. 2: 11, 12; Luke 24: 46, 47; Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 36-39.) The publishing of the story of salvation is the principal message of the Book of Acts. Gospel preaching also involves the telling of the promises which Jesus makes to all people who obey him, including the remission of their sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life to all who are faithful until death. It is easy to see from 2 Pet. 1: 4 that the promises are used on the divine side of salvation as motives unto obedience.

It should not be overlooked that the great body of the disciples of Christ, who were driven out of Jerusalem by persecution, were not preachers of the gospel, in the popular meaning of that term; but when they were compelled to flee for their lives, those who were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. They were all familiar with the word (cf. Acts 2: 42), and they knew what had happened to them; and it was for these reasons that they could tell others about the Lord and his plan for saving the lost. This should be an impressive lesson to all of us; for it is evident from the teaching of the New Testament (cf. Heb. 5: 11-14) that any Christian, within a reasonable time, should be able to teach others. But it should be obvious to any casual observer that the situation referred

to here is in marked contrast with the indifference, which is manifested by many professed disciples of Christ today.

Obedience and Rejoicing

(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? 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. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

As one observes the attitude and action of the eunuch, he has every reason to think that the Ethiopian nobleman wanted to know the truth; and it was for this reason that he was not only willing, but apparently eager, to listen to Philip. The New Testament makes it plain that when people manifest such an attitude toward the truth, that the Lord himself will bless them as they endeavor to learn his will. Jesus himself says, "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.) People who want to do that which pleases God, will be able to recognize the truth when they hear it or see it; but if they are not sympathetic toward it, they will not so recognize it. "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few." (Acts 17: 10-12.) The eunuch, too, was duly convinced, and promptly did that which is enjoined by the gospel message.

Those who customarily use the

King James Version of the Bible, sometimes wonder why verse 37, of the passage now under consideration, is omitted from the American Standard Version, the version which is used in these studies. It should be noted, in the first place, that the verse in question has been left out of the best versions, both before and after the King James Version; and so the real question is, Why was it made a part of the King James Version? J. W. 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." This, however, does not mean that what verse 37 says did not take place; it only means that Luke did not make

it a part of his record. The whole context implies that Philip made some kind of a reply to the eunuch's question, and that the latter satisfied the evangelist that he did believe; and it was probably for this reason that the interpolator reported that which he was certain did take place.

Philip apparently was miraculously caught away from the eunuch; but the eunuch continued his journey homeward, with his newly found faith, and with joy in his heart as a result of the salvation which had been bestowed upon him. Azotus was the old Philistine city of Ashdod; and if one will consult a map, he can easily see something of the area in which Philip continued his evangelistic labors.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What are some of the fundamental reasons for studying the New Testament?
What are some of the basic needs which all responsible people have with reference to their souls?
What provisions has the Lord made for meeting those needs?
Show how the New Testament works in meeting these needs.

How the Preacher and the Man Who Needed Salvation Were Brought Together

Trace the events which led to Philip's work in Samaria.
Who was the man Philip?
What makes the present case of conversion such an important one?
In what sense was the case of conversion the "work of four"?
Who are the angels and what important work, so far as mankind is concerned, has been assigned to them?
What was the angel's part in the conversion of the eunuch?
Where did Philip and the eunuch get together?
What did Luke mean by saying, "The same is desert"?
What information is given in the text regarding the eunuch?
What part did the Holy Spirit have in the conversion of the Ethiopian nobleman?
In what way does the New Testament record differ, in this respect, from popular denominational teaching?
Why didn't Philip need additional instruction from the Spirit at this time?

What influence, if any, did the Spirit bring to bear upon the eunuch?

The Work of the Preacher

In what way did Philip react to the instruction he received from the angel and the Spirit?
How did Philip go about getting himself introduced to the man in the chariot?
What could we do, under similar situations, to get in touch with some one with the gospel?
Why was Philip able, almost immediately, to get the eunuch's attention?
What reasons do we have for thinking that the Book of Isaiah is a literary unit?
Why was Philip able to start from the place where the eunuch was reading, and preach unto him Jesus?
What are some of the things which are involved in preaching Jesus?
Why were the fleeing disciples, as they left Jerusalem, so successful in their preaching?
Why do we have so few preachers and teachers in the church today?

Obedience and Rejoicing

Why was the eunuch so ready and willing to listen to Philip's preaching?
What kind of an attitude do those who please the Lord manifest in this respect?
In what way did the eunuch react to Philip's preaching?
What are the principal facts regarding "verse 37" of the text now before us?
In what way were Philip and the eunuch separated?
What did each of the men do and why?
When, in relation to his obedience, did the eunuch go on his way rejoicing?
What important lesson should we learn from this fact?

Lesson X—September 7, 1969

IDENTIFYING THE CHURCH

Lesson Text

Matt. 16: 18; Rom. 16: 16; Eph. 1: 22, 23; 4: 4-6; 5: 25-27

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 Spir-

GOLDEN TEXT.—“And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.” (Acts 2: 47.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 4; 11-16.

it, 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.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it;

26 That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,

27 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.

Daily Bible Readings

- September 1. M.Church, Christ's Body (Rom. 12: 1-8)
- September 2. T.Foundation of the Church (Matt. 16: 13-20)
- September 3. W.Brotherhood of Believers (Acts 2: 37-47)
- September 4. T.Church, Christ's Bride (Eph. 5: 25-33)
- September 5. F.Christ Loves the Church (Eph. 5: 22-24)
- September 6. S.Church Unshakeable (Heb. 12: 18-29)
- September 7. S.Members of Christ (1 Cor. 6: 15-20)

TIME.—A.D. 29-62.

PLACES.—Caesarea Philippi, Corinth, and Rome.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and those to whom he wrote.

Introduction

There are many basic reasons which contribute to the religious confusion in the world today, and high on the list is the failure to understand the meaning and place of the church in the divine economy. It appears that a large majority of people think that the church is a kind of organization, which has been set up, but with no connection with salvation; and that one may join it if he so desires, but if he does not his soul will be in no danger of being lost in the last great day. And too, the lack of a proper understanding of the meaning and place of the Lord's church in his effort to lead the world back to God, has

been further compounded by the presence of denominationalism, especially during the last two or three centuries, with the result that relatively few people in our time even try to understand the term "church" in its strictly Biblical sense; while the vast majority of those who do employ the word, do so in senses which are foreign to the Scriptures.

The place and purpose of the church is discussed somewhat in detail in Ephesians; and if one will read that epistle carefully and prayerfully, he will have his attention divinely called to the place and purpose of the church, as the medium through which the eternal pur-

pose of God is made known; and through which he is to receive glory from his redeemed creatures. The desire to rescue mankind from the power of the evil one, is the background against which God's purpose in Christ was formed. This purpose was gradually unfolded through the previous dispensations; but it was not until the coming of Christ that it reached its full fruition. (Cf. Rom. 10: 4.) This is what Paul affirms in the first twelve verses of the third chapter of Ephesians; and it is also clear in the passage just cited that, in the wisdom and economy of God, Christ and the church are inseparably bound together, with the result that the mission of neither would be fulfilled without the other.

God's eternal purpose, as Paul views the matter in Ephesians, is to gather into one body the whole created universe, and thereby restore harmony between the creatures themselves, and between them

and God himself as their Creator. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) The apostle's prayers were for that consummation; and in order that the people themselves might achieve that goal, his whole endeavor was to see to it that they might have a full and clear understanding of God's eternal purpose, which he is working out through Christ. Everything, argues Paul as he reaches the climax of this matchless document, centers in the purpose of God. All discord in the elements in the church, such as the distinction between the races of mankind, 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 fulfil, 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."

The Golden Text

"And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved."

It has frequently been pointed out in these lessons, that the church of the New Testament had its origin on the Pentecost immediately following the ascension of Christ; or, which is the same thing, the day on which Christ was crowned king. (Cf. Acts 2: 36.) Some of the material which went into the church, such as the apostles and others who followed Christ while he was here upon the earth, was prepared under John's commission; but the church as such did not become a living organism until the Pentecost just referred to; 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 (James 2: 26); and that was just as true of the church, as it is of human beings. We learn from John 7: 37-39 that the Spirit was not given before Jesus was glorified; and since all the members of the church "drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 13), we know that that organism did not come into being *before* the Pentecost of Acts 2, the day on which Jesus was glorified and the day on which the Spirit came. (Read Acts 2.)

The basic meaning of the term

"church" is the called out; or, to state the same thing in another way, the church is composed of the people who have been called out of the kingdom of Satan, and into fellowship with Christ. When the law of Moses had accomplished its purpose, all men, both Jews and Gentiles, were declared to be in sin (Gal. 3: 22; Rom. 3: 10, 23; 11: 32), and were therefore equally in need of a Savior. It was in view of this that Jesus gave the world-wide commission to his disciples (Mark 16: 15, 16; Matt. 28: 19, 20; Luke 24: 46, 47); and Paul makes it plain that it is through, or by means of, the gospel that we are called to Christ. "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14; cf. John 6: 44, 45; Rom. 1: 16.)

The second chapter of Acts records the first instance of people's being called to Christ through the gospel. Peter, who had the keys of the kingdom, or, which is the same thing, the church (Matt. 16: 19)

preached the first gospel sermon, which brought conviction to some of his hearers. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, 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. They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto

them in that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2: 37, 38, 41.) It was in this way, and on this occasion, that the church came into being, or, which is the same thing, became a living organism. The remainder of the second chapter of Acts tells something of the growth and progress of the church; and it closes with the words of the golden text, "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved"; or, as the marginal note has it, those that *were being saved*.

The Text Explained

The Church: Built by Christ and Wears His Name

(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 portion of the lesson text should be read in the light of its context, namely, "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." (Matt. 16: 13-18.)

It is easy to see, from the passage just quoted, and the Lord's statement, that is, the portion of the lesson text which we are now considering, was spoken in response to the confession which Peter had just made, namely, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The name "Peter" was given to Simon, the son of Jonah, by Jesus, when they first met (John 1: 42); and its literal meaning is a stone or a fragment of a rock. The gender is masculine. The term "rock," upon which Jesus said that he would build his church, is feminine gender,

and means a ledge of rock or a rocky mass. This solid foundation was the truth which Peter had just confessed, that is, the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This truth fully qualified Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the lost, and to call men from the kingdom of Satan into fellowship with him, and to constitute them into a family or household, where they could be trained for an eternal abode with the Father.

The first appearance of the word "church" in the New Testament, is in the passage now under consideration; and it is an interesting fact to note that the word is found in one other place in the entire gospel records, namely, Matt. 18: 17, where the reference is obviously to a single congregation. (See marginal note.) The Greek word for "church" was not coined by Christ and the apostles, but was in general use among Greek-speaking people, during the time our Lord was here upon the earth. The original term *ekklesia* (church) is a compound of *ek* (out of) and *kaleo* (to call); and as used by the Greeks, the word had no special religious significance. It simply was used to describe any body of people who were called out for any purpose. (Cf. Acts 19: 32, 39, 41, where the term was applied to the mob in Ephesus and the proconsular court.) The term was also used to describe God's people in the wilderness, who had been called out of Egypt. (See Acts 7: 38.)

Not only did Jesus promise to build his church; he also gave the solemn assurance that it would never be overcome by the powers of the Hadean world. Or, to express the same thing in another way, the

time will never come when all the members of the church will die and be gathered to Hades, thus leaving the world without the church of the Lord. The pronoun "it" is in the feminine gender, and if the translators had rendered the term "her" instead of *it*, there would have been no question about the meaning. (Cf. Dan. 2: 44; Heb. 12: 28, where the same idea of endurance is indicated.) Meyer notes that Jesus, in effect, is saying, "So securely will I build my church upon this rock, *that the gates of Hades will not be able to resist it*, will not prove stronger than it; indicating by means of a comparison, the great strength and stability of the edifice of the church, even when confronted with so powerful a structure as that of Hades, the gates of which, strong as they are, will not prove to be stronger than the building of the church." *The Berkeley Version of the New Testament* has this rendering: "and the gates of hell shall not hold out against her."

All the churches of Christ salute you.

The plural "*churches* of Christ" is evidently used in the sense of congregations, in various sections of the country. A similar use of the term is found in 1 Cor. 11: 16, namely, "the churches of God." One has only to read the New Testament in order to learn that many congregations were scattered throughout the lands of the Bible, when Paul wrote the words of the text now under consideration. (Cf. Gal. 1: 2; Rev. 1: 4; Col. 4: 13, 16.)

When Jesus stated that he would build the church, he referred to it as "my church"; and Paul told the Ephesian elders that the Lord paid for the church "with his own blood." (See Acts 20: 28.) Thus, if Jesus built the church, and paid for it with his own blood, then it certainly belongs to him; and that is what is implied when one speaks of the "church of Christ" or the "churches [congregations] of Christ." These and similar expressions simply indicate the relationship which the church as a whole, or the individual congregations, sustains to Christ. It is, of course, possible for one to employ the expressions just referred to in a sectarian or denominational

sense; and it is almost certain that such is actually done.

Christ Is the Head and the Church Is His Fulness

(Eph. 1: 22, 23)

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.

While Jesus was engaged in his public ministry here upon the earth, he was subjected to the abuses of both men and civil authorities; but when he was raised from the dead the situation was different. On one occasion, as he was about to state his world-wide commission to his disciples, he said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28: 18.) And in speaking of him, Peter says, "Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Pet. 3: 22.) This sweeping power and authority, which has been given unto Christ, will remain with him throughout his mediatorial reign, as may be seen from the testimony of Paul, namely, "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15: 24-28.)

The general idea which is contained in the passages just quoted, is also found in the section of the lesson text now under consideration, as may be seen from the following: "And what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly

places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 19-23.)

Thus, not only is Christ the head of the church; he is also the head of all things in the universe, with the sole exception of God himself, so that he is both able and willing to see to it that "all things work together" for the welfare and progress of the church, if only his people will serve him in love, and function in keeping with his purpose. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28.) This should be enough to convince every follower of Christ that divine authority must be recognized and respected; and that his people cannot afford to do anything less than to make every effort to see to it that the divine will is respected and obeyed.

When Paul speaks of the "fulness" of him that filleth all in all, he is apparently referring to the fact that the church supplements, that is, complements, or, which is the same thing, makes Christ complete, in pretty much the same sense that the wife supplements, complements, or makes complete her husband. The practical meaning of this is that the church is expected to do that which Christ himself would be doing, if he were here upon the earth in person. Or, to say the same thing in another way, the mission of the church today is but an extension of the personal ministry of Christ. This, of course, has no reference to the perfection of the plan of salvation, which was completed when Christ arose from the dead, and took his seat at the right hand of God in heaven; but rather to the task of making known the way of salvation to the lost, of edifying those who are in Christ, and of ministering to the needy, both in the church and out of it, as the opportunity presents itself. (Cf. Gal. 6: 10.)

The Unity of the Church and Its Purity

(Eph. 4: 4-6; 5: 25-27)

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.

This section of the lesson text should be read in the light of its general context, namely, Eph. 4: 1-16; and when that is done, it will be observed that the term "therefore" in verse one has the effect of calling the attention to the connection between that which has already been said, and that which is about to be said. The first three chapters of the letter, as has already been pointed out, sets forth the place of the church in the eternal purpose of God; while the last three chapters show that that purpose can only be accomplished by the practical living of God's people. The Lord's people must walk worthily of their calling; and that can be done, only if they give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The church, as it is revealed in the Book of Ephesians, and in fact the entire New Testament, may be thought of as a great spiritual melting-pot, in which all people who become members of it are made one in Christ Jesus. And when Paul comes to sum up those elements which enter into the Spirit, he notes, first of all, that there is one body, namely, the church; and that it is animated by one Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13). The apostle then goes on to show that all the members of the church have a common hope; that they are all ruled over by one Lord; that they all believe the same thing (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 10); that they were all separated from the world and brought together into one body by one baptism (see Gal. 3: 26, 27); and that since we are all one family we have therefore but one Father (cf. Eph. 3: 14, 15), who is over all, and through all, and in all. No one can consider these stirring words about the nature and meanings of the church, without having his interest quickened with respect to its unity.

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.

This section of the lesson text shows something of the close relationship which exists between Christ and the church. The whole context (Eph. 5: 22-33), where the illustration is based upon the husband-wife relationship—"This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church." (Verse 32.) The love of Christ for the church is seen in the fact that he gave himself up for it (cf. Acts 20: 28); "that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." This, apparently, is precisely the same idea which is expressed in Tit. 3: 5, namely, "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

The marginal reading of the passage just quoted is contained in the following brackets: "through the washing [laver] of regeneration and [and through renewing] renewing of the Holy Spirit." The "renewing of the Holy Spirit" is that which is done on the divine side, in order to make new creatures, or to impart the new life (cf.

Rom. 6: 3, 4—the renewing which is "effected by the Holy Spirit, Tit. 3: 5"—Thayer); while the "washing of regeneration" is water baptism. This is the same lesson which Jesus taught in his lesson on the "new birth." (John 3: 3-5.) And so, when Paul says that Christ "cleansed it by the washing [laver] of water with the word," the reference is to water baptism, according to the teaching or direction of the word. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 38.) Vincent notes, "*With the word* describes that which accompanies the rite and which is the peculiar element of baptismal purification. Compare John 15: 3. Augustine says: 'Take away the word, and what is the water but water?' " Baptism alone, even in the right form, will not suffice; it must be in accordance with the teaching of the word. (Cf. 1 Cor. 12: 13.)

The bride, in the human relationship, makes every effort to appear before her husband, without any detraction whatsoever; but in the case of Christ and the church, it is he, rather than she, who must see to it that she has no "spot or wrinkle or any such thing," so that she may be "holy and without blemish." She, of course, must do her part.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, places, and persons

Introduction

What is one of the basic reasons for so much religious confusion in the religious world today?
Why is it so difficult for people to understand the meaning and place of the church?
In what way is the church related to God's eternal purpose in Christ?
How is this purpose to be accomplished?

The Golden Text

When and under what circumstances did the church of the New Testament have its beginning?
How do we know when the church became a living organism?
What is the basic meaning of the term "church"?
What does Luke mean by the words of the golden text?

The Church: Built by Christ and Wears His Name

In what context were the words of this section of the lesson text spoken?
What prompted the Lord to speak them?
What is the rock upon which Jesus built

the church? Give reasons for your answer.
Discuss the etymology of the word "church."
What great promise did Jesus make regarding the church?
How do we know that he was speaking of the church when he said that the gates of Hades would not prevail against it?
What were the "churches of Christ" which saluted the Roman brethren?
Why is it proper and right to speak of the New Testament church as the church of Christ?
Under what circumstances is it possible to use this designation in a denominational sense?

Christ Is the Head and the Church Is His Fulness

What great change took place with reference to Christ and people after his resurrection?
What power and authority were given to him and why?
How long will he exercise this power and authority? How do you know?
What is meant by saying that Christ is "head over all things to the church"?
What great responsibility is placed upon his people in this respect?
What does Paul mean by saying that the church is the "fulness" of Christ?

What great obligation does this place the people of the Lord?
What are some of the cardinal duties of the church?

The Unity of the Church and Its Purity

In what general context was this portion of the lesson text written?

How alone can the church help to accomplish God's eternal purpose with reference to it?

In what sense may the church be thought of as a "spiritual melting-pot"?

What are the principal elements of the unity of the Spirit, as it respects the church?

In what way is the close relationship of Christ and the church illustrated?

In what way did the Lord cleanse the church?

What is meant by the washing of water with the word?

Lesson XI—September 14, 1969

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

Lesson Text

John 4: 1-7, 19-26

1 When therefore the Lord knew that the Phar-i-sees had heard that Je'-sus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

2 (Although Je'-sus himself baptized not, but his disciples),

3 He left Ju-dae'-a, and departed again into Gal'-i-lee.

4 And he must needs pass through Sa-ma'-ri-a.

5 So he cometh to a city of Sa-ma'-ri-a, called Sy'-char, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph:

6 And Jacob's well was there. Je'-sus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Sa-ma'-ri-a to draw water: Je'-sus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Je-

ru'-sa-lem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Je-ru'-sa-lem, shall ye worship the Father.

22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Mes-si'-ah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

26 Je'-sus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Worship God." (Rev. 22: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 22: 8, 9.

Daily Bible Readings

- September 8. M.Rules of Acceptable Worship (John 4: 19-26)
- September 9. T.....Vain Worship (Matt. 15: 1-9)
- September 10. W.Worship in Ignorance Condemned (Acts 17: 16-31)
- September 11. T.....Will Worship Wrong (Col. 2: 20-22)
- September 12. F.Worship of Angels Forbidden (Col. 2: 16-19)
- September 13. S.John and an Angel (Rev. 22: 1-9)
- September 14. S.Meeting Christ in Worship (Matt. 18: 18-20)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Sychar, in Samaria.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the woman of Samaria.

Introduction

The greater part of the ministry of Jesus during his first year was apparently spent in Judaea, in and around Jerusalem, as well as some

of the rural sections of that province, with an occasional visit to Galilee. While it is not always easy, or even advisable, to try to follow a strictly chronological course in the ministry of our Lord, it does seem to be fairly certain that the greater part of the historical record of the first three chapters of John took place between verses 11 and 12 of the fourth chapter of Matthew. The fourth chapter of John describes the events of the journey from Judaea to Galilee. (Matt. 4: 12)

If one will look at a map of Palestine during the time of Christ, it will be easy for him to see that the country west of the Jordan was divided into three principle provinces, namely Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee. While the relationship between the Jewish people in the provinces of Judaea and Galilee, was not the closest, it is a historical fact that neither of those groups had any dealings with the Samaritans. (John 4: 9.) The original Samaritans dated back to the period of the Assyrian captivity, and were thought by some to have been a mixed race, resulting from the intermarriages of the poorer people of Israel, who were left in the land, and the foreigners who were brought in by the captors. But be that as it may, the Samaritans of Jesus' day were not in fellowship with the Jews.

The hostility which grew up between the Jews and the Samaritans, became very pronounced; with the result, as already indicated, that there was very little intercourse between the two peoples. Much of the background of the bitter animosity which existed between the two races, may be learned from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. When the people of Judah first returned to their homeland from the Babylonian captivity, with plans to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans offered to help them with that work; but the Jews promptly rejected their offer. And when Nehemiah, and those associated with him, were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, some of the leading men of the Samaritans did their best to frustrate the efforts of the Jewish workers. The Samaritans obtained permission from the Persian monarch to build their own temple, which they did on mount Gerizim; and they made the claim that that was the location which Moses designated as the place of worship. They accepted only the five books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy; and rejected all the rest of the Old Testament Scriptures. These are some of the reasons why the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

The Golden Text

"Worship God." Man is by nature a creature of worship. It is, in fact, as natural for him to worship, as it is for him to eat. We may, in truth, go a step further and say that it is utterly impossible for a normal man to live, and not worship. He may not always worship the right object, or in the right way; but it is certain that he will worship something, and in some manner. This, of course, is sufficient to show us that acceptable worship depends upon God's revealed will; and since this is true, man will be held responsible to his Maker for the object and manner of his worship. Or, to say the same thing in another way, man will be held responsible for his opportunity to learn that which Jehovah says about worship.

What, then, is acceptable worship? One of the first things which we

should notice is this, namely, Worship is not simply the performance of certain acts; it is, instead, something which takes place in the heart - "the adoring reverence of the human spirit for the divine." Therefore, before there can be any true worship, 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. When we have the proper feeling toward God, that feeling always seeks an outward expression. (Cf. the manner in which we endeavor to express our feeling toward those who have befriended us.) Some people do not appreciate having their friends express themselves to them, in the same way that others do. Some like compliments and to be "made over," while others do not appreciate such open manifestations of good will.

Thus, before one can worship God acceptably, he must first know something of his character, and what will please him.

It has already been pointed out that man is a being who must worship, and it goes without saying that no kind of worship can be substituted for that which is due Jehovah, if man is to reach the heights of his possibilities in the sight of his Maker. Even men of this world have recognized the place and importance of worship. "What greater calamity," exclaimed Ruskin, "can

fall upon a nation than the loss of worship! It is then that the temple is forsaken, and the senate and marketplace are dominated by the thoughts and will of men. Literature becomes frivolous, and science grows cold. The eyes of the young people are not lighted up by the hopes of greater things ahead, and those who have grown old in years are without honor. Society lives for trifles, and those who pass on into eternity are scarcely remembered by those who are left behind.

The Text Explained

Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

(John 4: 1-7)

When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs pass through Samaria. So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

It appears that the ministry of John the Baptist was over, at the time of this lesson. The harbinger had been imprisoned by Herod, and that, of course, was pleasing to the ones who were opposed to the work which John had been doing, in order to prepare a people for the reception of Christ. But the joy of the Pharisees did not last long, for the news soon reached them that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John did. The writer, however, explains that Jesus did not personally do the baptizing, but was doing it through his disciples. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 14, 15.) We are not told just why Jesus himself did not baptize those who came to him, but it is reasonable to suppose that he was occupied with the more important work of teaching, and that his followers were charged with helping the newly made disciples complete their obedience. And too, it is

sometimes the case that a person will attach undue importance to the fact that a prominent person baptized him. This seems to have been the way Paul felt about the matter.

It was pointed out earlier in this lesson that the greater part of the first year of the public ministry of Jesus was spent in Judaea, with an occasional trip into Galilee, which was his home country; and this seems to be somewhat confirmed by the language which John uses here—"he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee." (Cf. John 2: 1-13.) The journey from Judaea to Galilee made it necessary that a road over which the trip be made be selected. There were, in all probability, several different routes between the two provinces in question; but it appears that the Jews, generally speaking and because of their intense dislike for the Samaritans, usually avoided going through Samaria. It is possible that the road which was most often travelled by those who were going to and from Judaea and Galilee, was the one east of the Jordan through Perea. This was indeed the longer route, but it appeared to have been preferred to the Jews more often than not.

But Jesus chose the route through Samaria, as he made his way from Judaea to Galilee; and John's language concerning it is both interesting and suggestive, namely, "And he must needs pass through Samaria." *The Fourfold Gospel* (McGarvey and Pendleton) thinks that Jesus felt that he had to hurry to Galilee, because of the arrest and imprisonment of John, in order to keep the

latter's work from suffering, due to the scattering of his disciples; and it was for this reason that he chose the most direct route. Hendriksen, on the other hand, is of the opinion that Jesus was directed in the journey by his heavenly Father, or, to state the same thing in another way, he was ever conscious of the fact that he was fulfilling the divine will, and that he was providentially guided as he went about his work from day to day. There is no way, of course, for one to be absolutely certain as to why Jesus went through Samaria; but it does appear that the weight of the record is on the side of the providential guidance. (Cf. Mark 1; 12; John 13: 1; 12: 48-50; 14: 31; 4: 34; Acts 10: 38.)

The events which were soon to transpire at Jacob's well, along with the signal success which characterized Philip's evangelic labors in Samaria following the scattering of the Christians from Jerusalem, after the martyrdom of Stephen, seems clearly in line with the idea that Jesus was providentially guided in his passing through Samaria. The Lord's meeting with the woman of Samaria was near the site of the Samaritan temple, and it appears that she was ideally suited to get the Lord's message to the people of that area. Bible students are not agreed as to which time, Jewish or Romans, was used by John in writing this record. If it was Jewish time, then the sixth hour was noon; but if Roman time, then the sixth hour was six o'clock in the evening.

John, along with other Bible writers, does not usually give many of the details of the events which he records, and about which we would like to know; but he does tell enough to enable us to have a fairly accurate picture of that which took place. The fact that the woman appears to have come alone to draw water, strongly suggests that it was not the usual time for the woman to come for that purpose. (Cf. Gen. 24: 10ff; Ex. 2: 16; 1 Sam. 9: 11.) This is one of the reasons for thinking that the reference was to Jewish time. Some expositors are of the opinion that the moral character of the woman in question, may have had something to do with her being alone. It is also possible that she

may have been working in a nearby field, and came to the well for a refreshing drink for herself, and to carry back water with her for others who may have been working in the same field. The term "Samaria" refers to the country by that name, and not to the city of Samaria, which was some six or eight miles from the well where Jesus and the woman were.

The text now under consideration says specifically that Jesus was wearied with his journey, and that he was sitting by the well when the woman of Samaria arrived. This is one of the many New Testament references to the humanity of our Lord. He was subjected to the same fleshly infirmities which characterize mankind in general. (Cf. Heb. 4: 15.) Jesus opened the conversation with the woman, by asking for a drink of water; and Johnson points out that it was customary for the people of that day to grant such a request cheerfully, even to strangers and enemies. If one will read the full context, he will see that there is nothing to indicate that the woman, although surprised that a man of the Jewish race would ask a Samaritan for a drink of water, had any intention of refusing the request.

Jesus apparently was alone when the Samaritan woman arrived at the well, and was resting nearby, while his disciples had gone into the city to buy some food for him and for themselves. And as already indicated, the request on the part of Jesus for a drink came as a surprise to the woman, inasmuch as she recognized him as being a Jew. We are not told just how she reached that conclusion, whether by his dress, physical features, or speech, or by all of them together; but realizing how the Jewish people felt toward the Samaritans, she was filled with surprise, when, as she viewed the matter, Jesus condescended to ask her for a drink. This implies, of course, that the woman considered Jesus as being a typical Jew. This should be enough to show us that the Lord's people should endeavor to live above the common run of men, that is, men of the world. (Cf. 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12; 3: 13-16.)

Regarding Sacred Places of Worship

(John 4: 19-22)

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that 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. Ye worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.

It is assumed that those who are studying this lesson have read the verses between the first and second sections of the lesson text. The woman's remark in verse 19 has led commentators to suggest two possible motives for speaking as she did, namely, (1) a desire to change the subject, because of her immoral situation; and (2) a genuine desire to obtain information on a subject in which she was deeply interested. However there is one thing which we should keep in mind, as we approach a discussion of this question, and that is this: no one should be dogmatic regarding the motives of others, unless the Scriptures themselves, in giving the facts in the case, justify such an attitude. It is altogether possible that the woman did want to get away from the discussion of an embarrassing subject (cf. verse 17), and it is also possible that she, having come face to face with some one who knew the answer to the question of the day, really wanted to learn the truth about the subject. (Cf. verses 27-29.)

"This mountain," to which the woman of Samaria referred, was mount Gerizim, not far from Jacob's well. And in speaking of this well, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* notes that it is one of the most exactly identified sites in Old Testament Palestine. One would expect to find this well out in the open, but, as it is, it is beneath a church building; and it is necessary to descend a stairway in order to reach it. In referring to "our fathers," the woman of Samaria was again stating her claim to the heritage of Jacob and his descendants. Those who are familiar with the Old Tes-

tament are aware of the fact that Jeroboam, the first king of Israel and a descendant of Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim, taught the northern kingdom to worship elsewhere, than in Jerusalem. (1 Kings 12: 25ff.) When the Jews returned from Babylon and were preparing to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, as already noted, the Samaritans offered to help them. But when the offer of the Samaritans was rejected, they, under the leadership of Sanballat, built their own temple on mount Gerizim. This temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, about 129 B. C.; but the place remained holy, so far as those inhabitants were concerned; and to this day, according to Vincent, Robertson, and others, the Samaritans annually celebrate the feast of the passover there.

But Jesus informed the woman of Samaria that she and her fellow-worshippers had no basis for their claim regarding Gerizim and the object of their worship; for they had rejected the source of such information: while he and the Jews had a solid basis for their claim, namely, the word of God itself. The principle which Jesus emphasizes is one which needs to be stressed today; for it is only by relying exclusively on God's revealed plan for his people, can one be certain that he is pleasing the Father. When people reject that which God says about salvation from the evil one, and endeavor to follow their own way, or which is the same thing, the teaching of men, it can truthfully be said of them, "Ye worship that which ye know not." (Cf. Matt. 7: 21-23; Gal. 1: 6-9.) It was from the Jews, and not from the Samaritans, that salvation came. (Cf. Rom. 3: 1f.; 9: 1-5.)

That Which Constitutes Acceptable Worship

(John 4: 23-26)

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he

will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Jesus refused to enter into a controversy with the woman of Samaria regarding the place of worship; instead, he told her plainly what would have to be done, if she was pleasing to the Father. The reason why the Samaritan woman worshipped in ignorance, along with her fellow countrymen, was due to the rejection of the Old Testament Scriptures, except the five books of Moses. (Cf. Acts 17: 23.) No one can set aside that which Jehovah has said, and still be pleasing to him. The reason why people who worship God must worship him in spirit and truth, is that God himself is a Spirit, and cannot therefore be localized and worshipped in a material manner. (Cf. 1 Kings 8: 27; Psalm 139: 7-10; Jer. 23: 23, 24; Acts 17: 26-28.) There was a time when, according to divine revelation and direction, men had to worship at certain places; but that was before God's will was fully made known.

It was pointed out earlier in this study, and it should be repeated just here, that worship is not simply the performance of certain acts; on the contrary, it is something which takes place in the heart. There cannot therefore be any true worship, until the emotions are properly aroused; and that is done by the knowledge of who and what God is, and what he has done for us. When one has the proper feeling toward God, it always seeks an outward expression; and when one is properly instructed, the outward expression of his feeling for his Maker will conform to the Divine will.

The essential conditions of true or acceptable worship, as set forth in verse 24, are (1) *The right object—God*. The conditions of worship are such that the worshipper becomes like the object of his worship. Therefore, the idea which man form of God will have much to do with

the development of his own character. (2) *The right motive—in spirit*. This involves sincerity, thus assuring that worship will be neither formal nor indifferent. True worship includes a spiritual sense of the God worshipped, and a spiritual communion with him. (3) *The right way—in truth*. Thus, guided by the truth, and therefore free from false conceptions, resulting from imperfect knowledge. True worship includes a truthful conception of the object of worship; and it goes without saying that a truthful conception of God can only be gained from a knowledge of his word, which is his truth. (Cf. John 17: 17.)

It is a fact which can be demonstrated, that singing, praying, teaching, eating the Lord's supper, and giving of their means for the relief of the poor, were ways in which the early Christians expressed their feeling to God, when they met together to worship him. Some people have made an effort to make it appear that the Lord's supper is the most important part of the worship; and that if one can partake of that, it will not make a great deal of difference if he has little or no part in the singing, praying, teaching, and the contribution. There is, of course, no scriptural foundation for such a conclusion. The Lord's table is the "center" around which Christians gather for worship, and everything they do while there is important. There is nothing which is included in acceptable worship, which one may neglect, or refuse to consider as important, if he is to please God. If one cannot have part in all the worship at a given time, it is doubtful if the Lord expects others to "carry" the Lord's supper to him.

It was in response to a statement by the woman of Samaria, that Jesus, for the first time, so far as the record goes, made known the fact that he is the promised Messiah. The Hebrew *Messiah*, the Greek *Christ*, and English *Anointed*, all mean one and the same thing.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Where did Jesus spend the greater part of the first year of his public ministry?

In what part of the gospel record do we learn about this?

In what way was the western portion of Palestine divided, that is, west of the Jordan?

Who were the Samaritans and why did the Jews feel as they did toward them?

The Golden Text

- In what way is man related to the idea of worship?
- How alone may one determine what is acceptable worship, that is, acceptable to God?
- Give a practical definition of worship.
- What must always happen before one can worship acceptably?
- Why is worship of God so vital to our well-being?

Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

- Why did Jesus leave Judaea and go to Galilee at the time of this lesson?
- What is said here regarding the success of his ministry?
- What appears to have been the custom of the Jews in travelling to and from Judaea and Galilee, and why?
- Why, apparently, did Jesus decide to go through Samaria?
- What important lesson should we learn from this?
- What over-all good seemingly resulted from the Lord's journey through Samaria?
- What do we learn from this lesson regarding the manhood of Jesus?
- What request did he make of the woman at the well and how was she affected?

Regarding Sacred Places of Worship

- What facts do we gather from the record between the first two sections of the lesson text?
- Why is it always important to read the context of a given passage?
- What possible motives prompted the woman's remarks in verses 19, 20?
- To what mountain did she have reference and why did the Samaritans worship there?
- In what way did Jesus answer the woman's question?

That Which Constitutes Acceptable Worship

- Why, apparently, did Jesus decline to enter into a controversy with the woman about places of worship?
- What did he tell her about the question?
- What are the essential conditions of acceptable worship?
- Why is God alone the object of true worship?
- What is meant by worshipping in spirit?
- How alone may one worship in truth?
- How did the early Christians worship?
- Why did some people endeavor to make it appear that the Lord's supper is the most important part of the worship?
- What important announcement did Jesus make at the time of this lesson?

Lesson XII—September 21, 1969

THE CHRISTIAN GRACES

Lesson Text

2 Pet. 1: 1-12

1 Si'-mon Peter, a servant and apostle of Je'-sus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Je'-sus Christ:

2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Je'-sus our Lord;

3 Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue;

4 Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.

5 Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge;

6 And in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control pa-

tience; and in your patience godliness;

7 And in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Je'-sus Christ.

9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

10 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:

11 For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Je'-sus Christ.

12 Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you.

Golden Text.—"Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble." (2 Pet. 1: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 2: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

September 15. M.	Abounding in Grace (2 Cor. 8: 1-7)
September 16. T.	Growing in Knowledge (Col. 1: 9-18)
September 17. W.	Growing in Love (Phil. 1: 1-11)
September 18. T.	Growing in Faithfulness (John 15: 1-10)
September 19. F.	Patience in Trial (James 1: 1-7)
September 20. S.	Godliness Profitable (1 Tim. 4: 1-8)
September 21. S.	Supremacy of Love (1 Cor. 1: 1-13)

TIME.—A.D. 67 or 68.

PLACE.—Apparently Babylon.

PERSONS.—Peter and those to whom he wrote.

Introduction

When one is born into the kingdom of Christ (John 3: 3-5; 1 Pet. 1: 22-25), his life as a child of God is just getting under way. The new life has been delivered into a sphere, also known as the church (Matt. 16: 18, 19), which is suited for its growth and development. And if one is faithful to the Lord, the remainder of his time here upon the earth will be spent in the church, where all of his service must be rendered in the name of Christ. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10: 31.) "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3: 17.) This, of course, implies total commitment in the service of the Lord; for the redeemed soul has literally been bought by the blood of Christ, and he no longer belongs to himself. (1 Pet. 1: 17-19; 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.)

The apostle Peter also says, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Pet. 2: 9.) The original term for "excellencies" is *aretas*, the accusative plural of *arete*; and it means about what is understood by the word "virtue." (Cf. Phil. 4: 8; 2 Pet. 1: 3, 5, where the same original word is found.) When the reference is to God, as in the case now before us, the idea is, as Alford expresses the matter, his gracious dealings and glorious at-

tributes. (Cf. Isa. 42: 12; 43: 21, Septuagint Version, where *aretas* is rendered "praises.") The passage just quoted from Peter, may be abbreviated, for the sake of emphasis, as follows: "Ye are . . . that ye may"; or, "Ye are what ye are, in order that ye may glorify God, by declaring his gracious dealings and glorious attributes." It would, of course, be difficult to do this, without endeavoring, at the same time, to do his will.

Paul told Titus that Christ 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.) And again, "Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I desire that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works." (Tit. 3: 8.) "And let our people also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." (Tit. 3: 14.) That which has just been said is sufficient to show that Christianity is a purposeful life. The religion of Christ has, indeed, been described at the reproduction of the life of Christ in the human heart; and this is apparently just about what Paul means by saying that the church is the "fulness," that is, the complement or that which makes him complete, of Christ. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the mission of the church here upon the earth, is but an extension of the life and ministry of Christ. (Cf. Eph. 1: 22, 23.)

That which has already been said

in this study is enough to convince any thoughtful person that the Christian life is an active life. But action alone is not enough; those who please the Lord must have a definite aim in life. This is what is meant by saying that Christianity is a purposeful life. There is an old adage which says that a man without a rudder and a sail; and the lesson which is suggested by the comparison, is applicable alike to individual Christians and congregations. Paul says, "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.) And to the Romans the same apostle wrote: "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.) It is only by following the course which has been outlined so far in this study, that one can manifest the Christian graces.

The Golden Text

This part of our study for today is contained in the principal text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

The Text Explained

God's Part in Making Our Transformation Possible

(2 Pet. 1: 1-4)

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue, whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.

The opening verses of Peter's second epistles, as some one has noted, contains (1) *the secret of liberty*: "a servant [literally, *bondservant*] and apostle of Jesus Christ"; (2) *the basis of equality*: they "that have obtained a like precious faith with us"; (3) *the very genius of fraternity*: "grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

But some one may ask, If one is bound, how can he be free? The answer is simply this: If there is no restraint, then there can be no liberty; for freedom without restraint, is always self-destructive. The

most enslaved person today is the one who will not be bound to anybody or anything. But when one is bound to Christ, he is then free to be and to do anything which is best for him, and which will lead him on toward a perfect likeness with God. And so, in the words of George Matheson:

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

When people are one in Christ, they are on an equality in his sight; and that is the only true basis for genuine brotherhood. (1 Cor. 12: 12-27.)

One of the cardinal truths of the New Testament is that no one is ever saved from sin, without God and his own efforts. Paul says, "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." (Eph. 2: 8, 9.) God's grace provided and offered the salvation; but man, through faith, must accept it, if he is to enjoy it. It is with this same idea in mind that Peter opens the discussion now before us. The "divine power" which is referred to here, is the same power which was

wrought in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the raising of the spiritually dead from the power of sin (Eph. 1: 19-2: 6); for it is an axiomatic truth that "the power to save and deliver is grounded only in the omnipotence of God and must proceed from it." The practical manifestation of this power, so far as we are concerned, is in the gospel. (Rom. 1: 16, 17.)

Everything which we need for living the Christian life is supplied by this divine power (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17), based on the knowledge of him who called us (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14) by his own glory and moral excellence. And it is through the divine power, or gospel message, that God has granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these, that is, these promises, we may become partakers of the divine nature; or, which is the same thing, the characteristics and disposition of God. Any one who becomes a Christian is expected to grow into the likeness of God (cf. Matt. 5: 48); and it is for the reason of having something to simulate our growth that the promises of God were given to us. (Cf. 2 Cor. 7: 1.) When people were convicted of their sins, in New Testament times, they did not mull over the matter, while trying to make up their mind about what they should do; instead, they, at their first opportunity, sought to escape "from the corruption that is in the world by lust."

Man's Part Made Clear

(2 Pet. 1: 5-11)

Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for

thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We considered, in the preceding section of this study, God's part in the scheme of human redemption; and here we are to deal with man's part. It is true that God does not want any one to be lost (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9), but it is also a recorded fact that he neither will nor can save any one against his will. (Ezek. 18: 30, 31; 33: 11; John 5: 39, 40; Mark 16, 15, 16.) It is already been pointed out that the unconverted sinner is by nature a child of wrath, the term "nature" being used, according to Thayer, in the sense of a condition which has been brought about by long habit, with the result that it has become one's nature. (Eph. 2: 3.) And inasmuch as those who are saved from sin must be like the Lord, before they can live with him in glory (1 John 3: 1-3), it follows, as clearly as the force of a demonstration, that their nature must be changed. The old man or nature must be put off, and the new man or nature must be put on (Eph. 4: 22-24), both of which are involved in the process of obeying the gospel, both in becoming a child of God, and in living the Christian life. When one becomes a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 17; Tit. 3: 5; Rom. 6: 3-7), it is then that the process of partaking of the divine nature begins.

As Peter begins his discussion of the human part in the scheme of redemption, he says, "Yea, and for this very cause." That is, because of what God has done, you are expected to do your part. If people would only read and study the Scriptures, and really see for themselves that which the Lord has done to make our salvation possible, it would be much easier for them to enter into the real spirit and practice of living, so as to be pleasing to him. Every sacrifice which is essential to man's well being, was made by the Divine side; and there is not a single thing which is required of the people who have been redeemed from sin, that does not actually result in their own good. Everything which is done for the glory of God, is also for the good of those who are rendering the service.

There is perhaps no more inspiring example of the question we are now discussing, found anywhere in the New Testament, than the reaction of the apostle Paul. When that great man came to realize that which God had done for him, there was no kind of sacrifice which he was not willing to make, if it would result in his pleasing the Lord. In writing to the Philippians, he said, "Yea verily, and I count all things to be lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: from whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." (Phil. 3: 8-11; cf. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

The Christian graces which Peter mentions in the passage now under consideration are to become part and parcel of our faith; and this implies, of course, that faith is the basis of all we are and do. "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.) The two elements of faith are (1) *conviction* that God is, or, which is the same thing, that he exists; and (2) *confidence* that he will do that which he promises to do. Earlier in the lesson text, as we have already seen, Peter refers to "them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ." This faith, which was obtained when they accepted the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1: 16, 17; 10: 1-3), has been referred to as the "coin of the realm" in God's kingdom.

And in order to emphasize the urgency of the matter, the apostle Peter says, "Adding on your part all diligence," thereby linking faith and diligence together. *Diligence* means to interest one's self most earnestly in the task at hand, or, which is the

same thing, make every effort to accomplish it. Faith and diligence are two aspects of the Christian life, and success in it is impossible without both. The faith which we obtain when we become Christians is not enough; it must grow and develop; and Peter shows in the section of the text now before us the direction which must be taken. Something must be supplied, and diligence is essential if the work is to be consummated. The end in view is the formation of a character which will be acceptable to God; and those who are endeavoring to bring this to pass must supply the ingredients according to the divine formula. This implies, of course, that the Christian life is no accident. It may be compared to a chemist diligently compounding ingredients after a given formula. Faith, as already noted, is the basis of this desired character, and the other ingredients must be supplied. If this is not done with diligence, then the result will almost certainly be disappointing, or even unacceptable. Each of the ingredients is prescribed by the Lord, and it has a definite effect upon the preceding one.

Virtue is moral energy, manliness, courage, and the idea is that our convictions should be held in a manner becoming a man; or, to say the same thing in another way, we should have the courage to stand up for that which we believe to be right. Our faith must be translated into vigorous action; for it is never enough for one to bluster and blow about what he believes. *Knowledge* is gained from the study of the Scriptures, and it is essential for the purpose of tempering virtue or courage; for courage without knowledge may become very dangerous. And too, no one can be pleasing to God in the absence of knowledge. (2 Pet. 3: 16; Hos. 4: 6; Matt. 11: 29; Heb. 5: 12.) This should be sufficient to demonstrate to any professed follower of Christ that he should be very diligent in his efforts to learn that which the Bible teaches, to the best of his ability.

Self-control is holding one's self within due limits, as it respects pleasures, duties, and all things else. It makes little difference how sound in the faith one may be, or how

great his knowledge of the Scriptures is, if he cannot control himself, that is, if he cannot bring himself to place first things first. James says, "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.) There are times for relaxation, for pleasure, as well as for serious efforts of constructive goodness; and the man who can deal with each one in a manner which will contribute to God's glory, and the good of himself and others, is the man who can control himself. There are hundreds and thousands of professed Christians who do not hesitate to neglect to assemble with the saints for worship and service, in order to visit, sleep late, and otherwise enjoy the pleasure of this world.

Patience is steadfastness (see marginal note), and, as Thayer points out, it is "the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings." The church in Thessalonica was brought into being in the midst of severe persecution; and it appears that Paul was permitted to remain with them for only a short time. His feelings during their separation may be learned from his first letter to them, namely, "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone; and sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith; that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed. For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain." (1 Thess. 3: 1-5.)

Stedfastness therefore does not mean that one remain loyal to Christ under favorable conditions; it means that, but it also means that the person in question remain loyal to Christ under the most trying circumstances. When John was describing the blessings of the heavenly home, he made this significant

comment: "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." (Rev. 21: 8.) The "fearful" are the timid, and the reference, according to Thayer, is to those "Christians who through cowardice give way under persecution and apostatize." What, then, can be said of the careless and indifferent!

Godliness involves reverence, respect, and piety toward God; and, like the other graces, it must be cultivated. *Brotherly kindness* is the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren in Christ (see Thayer; cf. John 13: 35; 1 John 3: 14-18; 4: 20, 21). *Love* is the love which the Lord's people have for all mankind, distinct from and in addition to, the love which they have for each other; and it is in this way that the Christian acknowledges that every man has a claim on his soul and service. Some one has noted that love tempers duty into opportunity. Such love is not directed by emotion alone; it comes by deliberate choice, and always seeks its object's highest good.

The seven Christian graces which are to be added to our faith are not to be looked upon as seven steps which one takes in living the life for the Lord, but are, as already pointed out, seven ingredients which are compounded into character. Each of the graces has a definite effect on the others—on the whole. If one of the seven prismatic colors were missing, there would be no glorious rainbow arching the heavens; and if one wheel, or other vital part, were absent from the mechanism of a watch, there could be no measuring of time as it passes by. And so, if any one of the ingredients which Peter names here is lacking, the Christian character cannot be complete; it will of necessity be deformed. Such a person's daily life will be a mass of inconsistencies; and those about him will not be able to see a life adorned by the gospel of Christ. The results of following or not following Peter's admonition are stated positively and negatively in verses 8 and 9; while verses 10 and 11 tell us what to expect, if we

give diligence to make our calling and election sure.

The Teacher Has a Responsibility Too

(2 Pet. 1: 12)

Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you.

It is true that Peter was an inspired apostle; he was also an elder and a teacher in the Lord's church. This example which Peter cites

should encourage elders and teachers everywhere to keep themselves in readiness to help others in their efforts to develop a character which will be pleasing to God. There will always be need for motivation and exhortation, even where knowledge and establishment in the truth are present. No one ever reaches the point in the Christian life, where he has no further need for growth and development; and where he does not need the help and encouragement of his brethren, and especially those who can furnish motivation and direction.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

When does one begin living the Christian life?
Where is this life to be lived and why?
In what way does Peter express one's responsibility as a child of God?
How do we know that the life of a Christian is a purposeful life?
What is the primary duty of the church today?

God's Part in Making Our Transformation Possible

What are some of the fundamental ideas contained in the opening verses of Second Peter?
How can a "bound" person be free?
What is the only true basis for genuine brotherhood?
What two things are absolutely essential to the salvation of any one?
What is "grace" and what is "faith"?
What is the divine power to which Peter makes reference?
What is made possible for us by this divine power?
What is one of the prime purposes of the promises of God?
In what way does Peter describe these promises?
What did people in New Testament time

do, when once they realized their true condition?

Man's Part Made Clear

Why is it essential that both God and man have part in the salvation of the lost?
Why won't God save any one against the latter's will?
What is the condition of the sinner when he first hears the gospel?
What change must be made before any one can live with God in heaven?
What, then, does it mean for one to become a partaker of the divine nature?
What motive does Peter assign for the diligence which Christians should manifest?
To what are the Christian graces to be added?
What is the true composition of faith?
Why is the addition of the Christian graces so urgent?
What is *virtue* and what application should be made of it?
How does one go about acquiring *knowledge*?
What is the meaning of *self-control*? of *patience*?
Discuss *godliness*, *brotherly kindness*, and *love*. What is the difference between the latter two?
Why is it essential that none of the Christian graces be lacking?
What is the teacher's responsibility and why is it so vital?

Lesson XIII—September 28, 1969

SOUL WINNERS FOR JESUS

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,

GOLDEN TEXT.—“He that will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 11: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

- September 22. M.Personal Evangelism (Acts 8: 26-40)
- September 23. T.Group Evangelism (Acts 8: 4-12)
- September 24. W.Evangelism under Difficulty (Acts 16: 22-34)
- September 25. T.Grateful Converts (Acts 16: 11-15)
- September 26. F.Rewards of Soul Winning (1 Cor. 3: 4-15)
- September 27. S.Equipment for Soul Winning (2 Tim. 2: 2)
- September 28. S.Heavenly Sheaves (Psalm 126: 1-6)

TIME.—John, A.D. 27; Proverbs, 1000 B.C.; Daniel, 534 B.C.; James, probably in the middle forties of the Christian dispensation.

PLACES.—John, Bethany beyond the Jordan; Proverbs, Jerusalem; Daniel, Babylon; James, unknown.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his early disciples, Solomon, Daniel, and James.

Introduction

We are told that Jesus came into the world to save sinners: that, in fact, is what the Lord himself said about this mission to the earth: “For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19: 10.) And if one will read the paragraph in which the statement just quoted is found, he will easily see that that was precisely what Jesus was doing at the time he uttered the words. And if any one is in doubt about what it means to win others to Christ, he will have before him one of the clearest illustrations of the process to be found anywhere. The narrative just referred to has been called a description of the love of God in action. The entire public ministry of Jesus is one continuous effort on his part, which has been recorded for our information and guidance, to seek for lost people, and to bring them to his heavenly Father.

One of the greatest difficulties of those who try to be soul winners for

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.

Christ, is the work of getting close to the lost. We have a message for them, which came from God; but the problem is how to gain their confidence, and get them in the mood to listen. It is comparatively easy to befriend and teach people who come to us; but how to reach the man who stands aside in his indifference, is the question which should challenge our attention. While there are multitudes of people who realize that they are lost, it must be admitted that there are countless thousands who are indeed lost, who do not realize it. One of the principal methods which characterized the efforts of Jesus to reach the lost, was that of kindness.

Kindness was unquestionably the method which Jesus used on Zacchaeus. Suppose the Lord had paused under the tree, from which the publican was watching him, and had said to him, “You child of the devil! You who grind the face of the poor and turn widows and or-

phans out on the street, how shall you escape the damnation of hell?" Jesus knew how to be severe and how to condemn, and in language far beyond that which has just been suggested, as may be seen by reading the twenty-third chapter of Matthew; but he also knew something about the heart and feelings of the average person who had been overcome by the evil one. Here was a man still capable of being won to a better life; and if Jesus had denounced him, as some are wont to do today, we likely never would have heard of Zacchaeus. (Cf. the

fable of the contest between the wind and the sun, in an effort to see which could make the man take off his coat. It was not the severity of the wind, but the warmth of the sun, that caused him to remove his coat.)

Down in the human heart, crushed
by the temper,
Feelings lie buried that grace can
restore:

Touched by a loving hand, awakened
by kindness,

Chords that were broken will vi-
brate once more.

The Golden Text

"He that will, let him take the water of life freely." The immediate context of the words just quoted is as follows: "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." If those who read this message from heaven could be made to realize just how much the Lord loves them and all other people of the earth, they would immediately accept his offer to bless them. Behold the father as he patiently watches for the return of the prodigal son! And what preparations were made to welcome him home, and to restore him to his rightful place! These are but pictures of the heavenly Father who wants all of his children to come back to him, and live for and with him, both in this world and in that which is to come. And not only does God want his people to return to him; he has made every possible sacrifice and preparation for them to do just that. Consider, for example, that great passage which is popularly called the golden text of the Bible, namely, "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; cf. Rom. 5: 6-8.)

It is true that God loves the entire world collectively, but any one who is familiar with the New Testament, will certainly acknowledge that the matter of salvation is an individual question. There is no such thing as "group salvation," without *personal responsibility* on the part of each individual involved. This principle

is forcefully illustrated by the calling of penitent Israel from their several dispersions. The matter is expressed by the prophet, speaking for God, in these words: "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" emphasizes the importance of the individual; and what was true of ancient Israel, is also true of people today. The gospel is proclaimed, and the invitation is extended, to the masses; but it is always the individual who responds. It is true that all who hear may respond, but they must always do so as individuals. It is ever the case, and the golden text has it, that *"he that will, let him take the water of life freely."*

The closing verses of the Book of Revelation, in which the words of the golden text are found, have been compared to the final movement of some concerto, in which we hear the instruments of the orchestra swelling in the flood of triumph. In this "scriptural concerto" many voices are audible, as they alternate in the over-all composition. Sometimes it is the Seer who speaks, sometimes an angel, sometimes a deeper voice from the Throne, that of Christ himself. It is often difficult therefore, in the midst of these swift transitions, to tell just who the speaker is; but this much is clear: In the verse just preceding the one containing the words of the golden text, the Lord himself had been proclaiming his royalty and the one

who holds all things in his hands; and then all is silent for a moment. But when the silence is broken, the response to the kingly utterance is made by the Spirit and the church, who together cry, Come. The call is also urged upon every hearer; each one is called upon to say, Come.

And then in answer to the cry of the Spirit, the church, and each individual, it appears that the Lord himself speaks again, this time to all the yearning and weary souls of the human race: He that is athirst, let him come; He that will, let him take the water of life freely.

The Text Explained

The Early Disciples As Soul-Winners
for Jesus

(John 1: 40-45)

One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). 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).

The setting for this portion of the lesson text was in the early days of the ministry of Jesus, when he was, in a very true sense, being introduced by John the Baptist, the man who had been sent to prepare the way before him. The author of the Fourth Gospel notes that, "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 the two disciples of John, who heard their master speak, was Andrew, who is described as being the brother of Simon Peter. Peter had not yet come upon the scene, when Andrew and an unnamed fellow disciple heard the words of the harbinger; but inasmuch as the Fourth Gospel was written long after Peter had become famous, Andrew is simply referred to as Simon Peter's brother. Although Andrew lived in the shadow of his illustrious brother, he has one advantage over

the latter, namely, the distinction of being the first person who brought another man to Christ.

If John's gospel record was written near the close of the first century of the Christian era, it is easy to understand why the author used so many parenthetical statements. His readers were evidently largely Gentiles, who needed help in understanding many of the terms and customs which would have been familiar to the Jewish people, whose nation, culture, and practices came to an abrupt end, when Jerusalem was destroyed in A. D. 70 by Titus and his army. The "Messiah" of the Hebrew is the "Christ" of the Greek and the "Anointed" of the English. The pious Jews, at the time of this portion of the lesson text were looking for the coming of the promised Messiah, that is, the promise which was contained in the predictions of the Old Testament prophets. "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.)

The most of the closing part of the first chapter of John is a record of the various ways in which men find Christ. There are some who, like Andrew and John, find him because they look for him; and it is safe to say that the majority of men who miss him do so because they are not interested in making a genuine search for him. But when people are interested in finding Christ, they are willing to take the suggestions of those who have found him, and who know the way to him. S. D. Gordon calls this one of the famous personal work chapters in the New Testament. There are, as the reader can see, three "findeths" in it. (1) Andrew findeth his own brother; (2) Jesus findeth Philip; and (3) Philip, in turn, findeth Nathanael; and while the record does not say so, it is altogether possible that John, the apparent companion of

Andrew, and the writer of the gospel narrative which bears his name, found his brother James. If this was true, then it would be as natural for him to omit that fact, as it was for him to omit his own name from the record. The statement in the narrative, that Andrew "findeth first his own brother Simon," could imply that John also found his brother; although the expression may simply mean that the first thing which Andrew did, after meeting Jesus, was to find his own brother, and take him to the man whom he believed to be the promised Messiah.

The meeting of Jesus and Simon was apparently their introduction to each other, and if it was, the words of Christ must have made a deep impression on the latter. Simon evidently knew something of his temperamental nature; and to have the man who had been represented to him as being the Messiah tell him that he would in time be called Cephas (Hebrew) or Peter (Greek), must have caused him to wonder greatly. The prediction of Jesus was literally fulfilled; for Simon did become as firm and stable, in his moral and spiritual behavior, and the proverbial rock, which is the literal meaning of the names Cephas and Peter. 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 Simon. The latent possibilities were within him, and were like seed which had been planted; but which had never been watered and, consequently, had never germinated and developed.

On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 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 so?i of Joseph.

One of the important lessons which we should learn from the narrative now under consideration, is that Jesus, as he went about choosing his disciples, demonstrated his faith in ordinary people, that is, people just like the average people of our day. It is true that Andrew

was often near the "inner circle" of the Lord's followers, but it ever remains true that he was never included in that group; but it is a noticeable fact, that wherever we read of the activities of that disciple, he was usually engaged in bringing others to Christ. And if Andrew has the distinction of being the first to bring a prospective disciple to Jesus, then Philip appears to have been the first to receive a direct call from the Lord to follow him. The events of the lesson, thus far considered, took place "in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing." (See John 1: 28.) This "Bethany" was apparently across the Jordan from the lower part of Galilee, and was probably the same as *Bethabara*. (See map, and any good Bible dictionary.) Jesus and all of the disciples which he had gathered about him, up to this time, 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. There was, however, another Bethsaida (*Bethsaida Julias*) northeast of the sea of Galilee, as may be seen by consulting a map of that region.

It is both instinctive and natural for one who has made a great discovery to tell others about it, and especially those who are close to him, and who cherish a similar attitude toward it. This, of course, was especially true when the discovery was that of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, namely the Messiah, or the one who was to come. It appears that no one told Andrew and Philip to go out and tell others about their great discovery, and there was indeed no need for such encouragement; for they knew both the need and the interest of others, and they gladly shared the information they had with them. This is the attitude which all who have found salvation in Christ should manifest; and when this is done, "personal work" will be the result. Some one has suggested that even a dog, which has had its injured or broken leg mended, will bring other limping dogs to the person who had been kind to it. And we may be sure that any one who really believes a worthwhile proposition, will be a "propagandist" for it. This is

true of the people of the world; and it is even truer of those who have been genuinely converted to Christ, as may be seen by reading the history of the early church, as found in the Book of Acts.

A Word about Soul-Winning

(Prov. 11: 30)

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that is wise winneth souls.

Many of the people who use this *Annual Lesson Commentary* in the preparation of their class work for the Lord's day Bible school are regular readers of the King James Version of the Scriptures; and if they read this section of the lesson text in the American Standard Version, the text used here, and also in the Authorized Version, they may be somewhat puzzled about that which appears to be a discrepancy between the two versions. The King James or Authorized Version renders the passage in these words: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." The American Standard Versions has it in these words: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that is wise winneth souls."

There may not, indeed, be a great deal of difference in the two rendering; but they are capable of making a difference, unless one is careful about his reading. For example, one is likely to get the idea from the King James Version that there is a certain amount of credit which accrues to the account of the man who wins souls; or, to state the same thing in another way, the man who wins souls is manifesting the part of wisdom. There is, of course, a certain amount of truth in the process; but that is hardly the idea which one gets from the American Standard Version.

When we consider the rendering in the version which is used in the preparation of these lessons, we are able to recognize the well-known use of "parallelism," so often found in Hebrew poetry. The principle of *parallelism* may be described as follows: There is a balancing of thought against thought, phrase against phrase, etc., in the two lines, which express the same general idea in slightly different words. And so, in the passage now before us, the

two parts are similarly constructed, and set forth a similar lesson. In the first line, the *effect* of a righteous life on others is like that of a tree of life; and in the second line, The *result* which flows from a life of wisdom is the winning of souls.

Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, says, in speaking of his disciples as 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." (Matt. 5: 16.) The *result* of letting one's light shine is that others will be led to glorify the heavenly Father, even though the one who is letting his light shine may not be making any direct effort to get others to glorify the Father. And so, the wise man is the one who does the will of God (cf. Matt. 7: 24, 25), and the *example* of his faithful obedience is certain to have its effect in the lives of others, whether he is actually aware of it or not; and just so in the case now before us: the wise man, that is, the one who strives to please God will have the effect of soul-winning. (1 Cor. 9: 19-22; James 3: 13-18.)

The Reward of Soul-Winning

(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. 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.

This passage of scripture has been made to apply to the "resurrection" of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, and other similar experiences; it has also been made to refer to the resurrection of the dead at the last day: and it appears very probable that the latter is the idea which the prophet had in mind. At any rate, we know that Jesus describes the final resurrection at the end of time in practically the same language: "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 resurrec-

tion of judgment." (John 5: 28, 29.)

The "wise" in Daniel's prophecy are those who do the will of God, as may be gathered from his use of the term in other parts of his record. "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.) "And they that are wise among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and spoil many days." (Dan. 11: 33.) The wise are they who shall instruct many, even though their instruction is not heeded on the part of some; but the wise shall turn many to righteousness, by their teaching and by their example; and they, that is, the wise, are the ones who 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.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What was the prime purpose of the Lord's coming into the world?
What is one of the great problems of soul-winning?
Show how Jesus went about doing this work and discuss the example he left us.

The Golden Text

In what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?
What method does the Lord employ in saving the lost?
What does it mean to take the water of life freely?

The Early Disciples As Soul-Winners for Jesus

Discuss the setting of the winning of the first disciples to Jesus.
Why did John explain so many of his expressions?
What prediction did Jesus make to Peter regarding his future?
What great honor has always remained with Andrew?
What do we learn regarding Philip and his relation with Jesus?

Those people who are careful readers of the Book of James will probably see little connection between the two verses just quoted, and the remainder of the letter. But if, as many students of the Bible think, the entire epistle is 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 for the Lord, and the reward which will be given to those who engage in such work.

But whatever may be the actual status of the letter itself, James does set forth something of the great joy which comes from soul-saving. It is the joy of the shepherd who finds the lost sheep, and gently brings it back to the fold; the joy of the father who patiently 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 erring. (Cf. Gal. 6: 1, 2.) The soul-winner covers a multitude of sins, when he leads the sinner to the Saviour who forgives them.

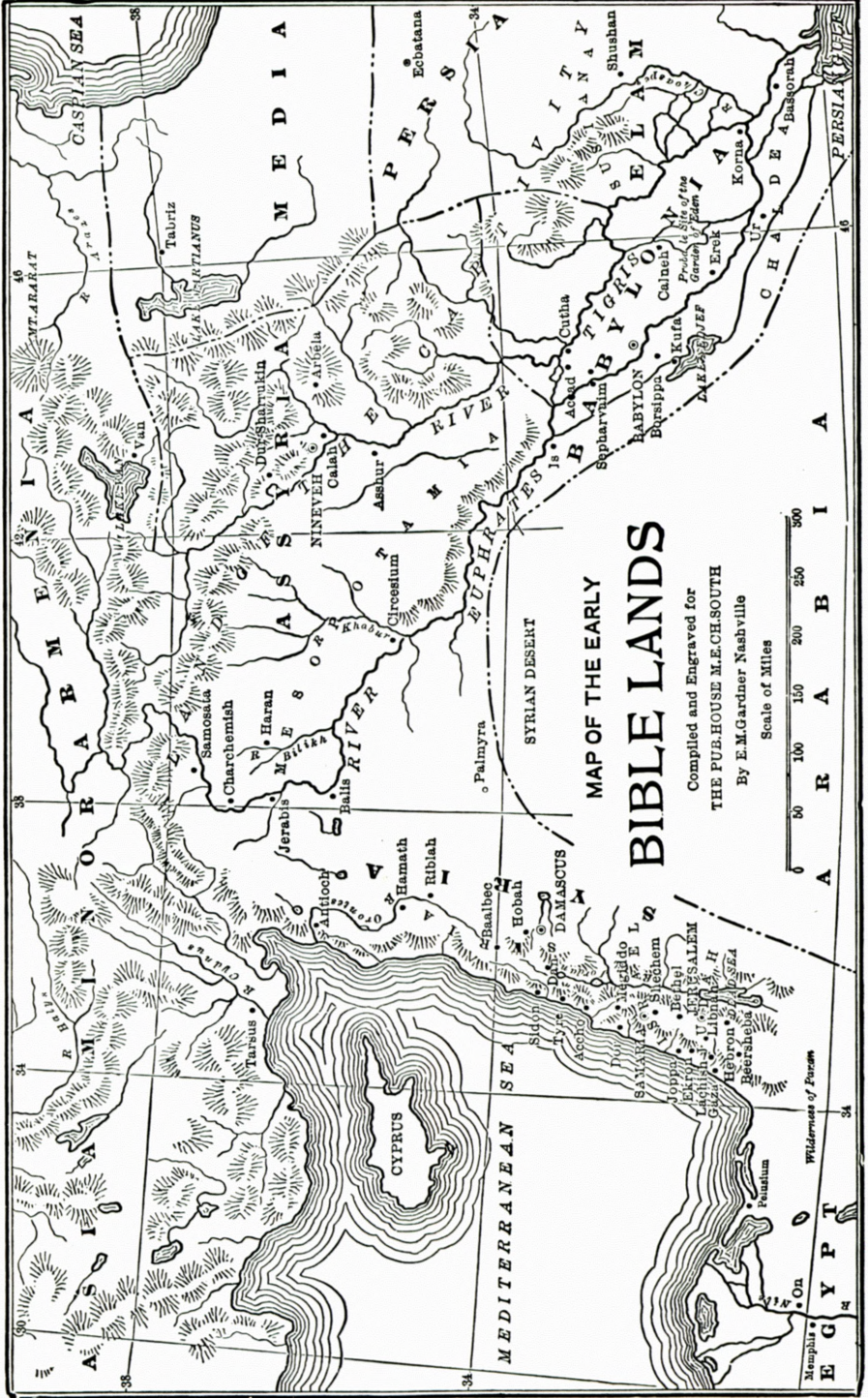
What is the best way to engage in personal work?"

A Word about Soul-Winning

Why should the readers of the Bible exercise care about considering a text?
What, apparently, is the proper meaning of the proverb now before us?
In what way is this same principle illustrated in the teaching of Jesus?
Why does Soul-winning naturally follow the life of wisdom?
What great responsibility does this principle place upon the Christian?

The Reward of Soul-Winning

What did the prophet Daniel apparently have in mind when he wrote the words of this portion of the lesson text?
Who, then, are the wise?
How do the wise turn many to righteousness?
What reward does Daniel say will be theirs?
In what way are the last two verses of James related to the rest of the letter?
What may have been the nature of the epistles from which this portion of the lesson text is taken?
What is the great joy of soul-saving?
What attitude toward the lost must one manifest, if he is to win them to Christ?
Why is this true?



MAP OF THE EARLY

BIBLE LANDS

Compiled and Engraved for
 THE PUBLISHING HOUSE M. E. CH. SOUTH
 By E. M. Gardner Nashville

Scale of Miles



Manabir • On
 Wilderness of Paran
 Penitium

Labels on the map include: CASPIAN SEA, MEDITERRANEAN SEA, PERSIAN SEA, ASYRIA, SYRIA, JUDAEA, SAMARIA, ASSYRIA, BABYLONIA, ISRAEL, JERUSALEM, HEBRON, DAMASCUS, TIGRIS RIVER, EUPHRATES RIVER, SYRIAN DESERT, and various cities like Jerusalem, Hebron, Damascus, and Babylon.

FOURTH QUARTER
GREAT THEMES OF THE BIBLE
(Second half of a six months' course)

AIM.—To *inform ourselves in some of the most vital themes of the scriptures and to imbibe the principles thereof in order to the transformation of our lives.*

Lesson I—October 5, 1969

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

Lesson Text

Matt. 28: 18-20; Eph. 4: 11-16; James 1: 27; 1 Tim. 5: 16

18 And Je'-sus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

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 chil-

dren, 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.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 15: 58.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 2: 41-47.

Daily Bible Readings

September 29. M.....	The Church—Its Builder (Matt. 16: 13-20)
September 30. T.....	The Church—Its Members (1 Cor. 12: 12-28)
October 1. W.....	The Church—Its Worship (Acts 2: 42-47)
October 2. T.....	The Church—Its Work (Eph. 4: 11-16)
October 3. F.....	The Church—Its Work (Matt. 28: 18-20)
October 4. S.....	The Church—Its Work (James 1: 27; 1 Tim. 5: 16)
October 5. S.....	The Church—Its Future (Rev. 21: 1-7)

TIME.—A.D. 29-67.

PLACES.—A mountain in Galilee, Jerusalem, Rome, and probably Philippi.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, Paul, James, and those to whom they wrote.

Introduction

The church of the New Testament is frequently referred to as the body of Christ. It is composed of the people who have been called out of the world, in response to the gospel; and it is built upon the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. When Christ began his mediatorial reign, the entire world was in sin (cf. Gal. 3: 22; Rom. 3: 10, 23), and that meant that all men were in need of a Saviour; and it was for this reason that the gospel was for the entire human race. When Jesus gave his commission to his disciples, just before he departed to return to the Father, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16; cf. Col. 1: 23.) The latter citation shows that the early disciples of the Lord were faithful to the trust that their Lord imposed on them.

When Paul wrote his second letter to the newly established church in Thessalonica, he said, "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.) All of this adds up to the fact that when people were called out of the kingdom of Satan, in response to the call of the Lord, they became members of a new order, which is vari-

ously called the church, the kingdom, and the body of Christ. (Cf. Col. 1: 13.) These people were purchased by the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19; Acts 20: 28), and became his people, his subjects, and his servants. (See 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.)

The letter which Paul wrote, and which we know as Ephesians, is largely given over to a discussion of the church, as it is related to the eternal purpose of God. (See the first three chapters of that epistle.) Early in the letter, Paul says, "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.) It is the conviction of many eminent Bible students that the term "fulness" indicates that the church is the complement of Christ, or, which is the same thing, that which makes him complete; and if this is true, the mission the church is but an extension of the earthly mission of Christ. Christ came into this world for the express purpose of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19: 10); and that, of course, is what the church is expected to do. The salvation of men and women not only means that they are freed from the guilt and power of sin (Rom. 6: 3-7); but that they are also entitled to receive whatever they need to aid them in living the Christian life. This is precisely what Jesus proposes for his people (Eph. 1: 3); and it is through the church that these things are to be administered, as we shall see in this study.

The Golden Text

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always bounding in the work of the Lord. forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." This passage has a wonderful ring of confidence; and, as has been suggested, it seems to be a kind of challenge to a godless world, which has tried and broken its last weapon against the disciples of Christ. Paul had just written about death and the resurrection, when he penned the words of the golden text. People in those days were being killed for their faith; and it there-

fore required great courage to live for the Lord. But Paul wanted his brethren in Corinth, and all other Christians (1 Cor. 1: 1, 2), to know that there are worse things which can happen to the Lord's people, than to die prematurely for their faith in Christ.

The kingdom of the Lord and the kingdom of the evil one are diametrically opposed to each other, and it is the primary purpose of Christ to rescue every person possible from the latter realm. And inasmuch as the church has been commissioned to carry on the work of Christ, the

implication is plain that there will always be warfare between the disciples of the Lord and those of the kingdom of darkness. The work of rescuing people from the dominion of sin is not easy, but the Lord has promised strength for the task in hand; and when Christians are willing to work as they should, they may rest in the confidence that all of their needs will be supplied. "And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 19.)

When a person is "stedfast" he has settled convictions and a fixed purpose. The term *stedfast*, according to some scholars, literally means

to be seated, as if to say, when convictions regarding truth and duty are concerned, be at rest, be seated, which, of course, is the opposite of standing in an attitude of readiness to change. And so, when a person reaches the point at which he knows in whom he believes, and what he believes, he can simply be seated. But when one comes to rest in his belief, and cannot be moved from it, the time has arrived when his work for the Lord must go forward in the vigor of manhood. Robertson notes that Paul has given rational grounds for faith and hope in Christ the risen Lord and Saviour; and that the best answer to doubt is work.

The Text Explained

The Authority of Christ and His Commission

(Matt. 28: 18-20)

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

The careful reader of the New Testament will note that the world-wide commission which Christ gave to his disciples is referred to in a number of places; but in no instance is the charge given in full in any one place. This, of course, makes it essential that the entire record be read, if we are to take into consideration all the details of the Lord's instruction regarding the work which he gave his people to do. The account of the commission here, however, is full enough to give us a fairly accurate idea of what is involved in it. The Father sent the Son into the world for the express purpose of wresting the kingdom from the hands of Satan; and in order to make that work possible, all of the resources of heaven and earth were made available unto him.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, gives us some idea of what is involved in the commission

which Christ received from the Father, as may be seen from the following statement, namely, "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all thing in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15: 24-28.)

The enormous task which was given to Jesus by the Father required, as we have already observed, all the resources of heaven and earth. Peter says that Christ "is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Pet. 3: 22.) The writer of Hebrews notes that the angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." (Heb. 1: 14.) And the apostle Paul says that Christ not only is the head of the church, but that God "gave him to be head over all things to the church," which evidently implies that Christ controls everything with relation to the church; so that "all things work together for good, even

to them that are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 28; Eph. 1: 22, 23.) The work of the church therefore will never fail, so long as it remains loyal to its head.

A. T. Robertson notes that Jesus spoke, on the occasion now before us, as if he were already in heaven, with a world-wide outlook and the resources of the universe at his command. Dr. Robertson further observes that this is the sublimest of all spectacles, to see the risen Christ without money, army, or kingdom, charging this band of men with world conquest; and bringing them to believe that it was entirely possible for them to undertake the mission with serious passion and power. Pentecost was yet to come, but dynamic faith was then in evidence on that mountain in Galilee! Continuing with the words of this scholar, "But here is the world program of the risen Christ and it should not be forgotten by those who seek to foreshorten it all by saying that Jesus expected his second coming to be very soon, even within the lifetime of those who heard. He did promise to come, but he has never named the date. Meanwhile we are to be ready for his coming at any time and to look for it joyfully. But we are to leave that to the Father and push on the campaign for world conquest. The program includes making disciples or learners (*mathêtesai*) such as they were themselves. That means evangelism in the fullest sense and not merely revival meetings.

The first task which was given to the Lord's disciples was to make learners in all the nations of the world; and when that was done, they were to baptize those learners into the names of the Sacred Three. The noun "nations" is neuter, while the pronoun "them" is masculine, which clearly shows that the individuals who have been made acquainted with Jesus, and who want to be the beneficiaries of the blessings which he offers to all who will accept him, are the subjects of baptism. And it is through the act of baptism that prospective followers of Christ are brought into the fullest fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are revealed to us in the Scriptures as one eternal and immutable *Eloheem*

Jehovah, the Creator, Preserver, and Upholder of all things.

The adverb "always," in the closing words of the Lord's commission to his disciples, separates him from every other teacher the world has ever known. He is, indeed, not here in person, as he was when he spoke the words now under consideration; but he is as truly with his people now, as he was when he stood before them on the mountain in Galilee. The promise to be with his disciples should be regarded as a source of great encouragement to every child of God. The marginal reading for "always" is *all the days*, while that for "the end of the world" is *the consummation of the age*. "All the days" includes bad days, as well as good days; and there is therefore no time when the Lord's people cannot depend upon him, for whatever they need, and which is beyond their power to obtain. (Cf. Phil. 4: 19; 1 Cor. 10: 13; James 1: 2-8; Heb. 13: 5, 6.) The final victory of Christ is absolutely certain, and the promise which he made here is both precise and detailed; and so, however long and perilous the journey may be, the Lord's people can always count on having the presence of their Divine Leader with them. (Cf. Rom. 8: 31-39.)

The Lord's Plan for the Growth and Unity of His Church

(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 Christs till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown 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.

The early members of the church of the Lord did not have a written law to guide them, and it was necessary therefore for them to depend upon inspired teachers for their instruction. (Cf. Acts 2: 42.) This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Corinthian brethren, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." (2 Cor. 4: 7.) The "earthen vessels" were the inspired men, and especially the apostles (Cf. Acts 9: 15; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20), and it was through them that the truth was made known; but after it was reduced to writing, we can very properly say that what the primitive Christians had in earthen vessels, "fragile containers," we now have in book form, which is also, in a very true sense, a fragile earthen vessel.

Paul names several of the principal inspired teachers of the early church, and heading the list are the *apostles*, the ones through whom the Lord made known his will to men. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6-10; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) The apostles were the ones who made known that which is to be taught and practiced by Christians, throughout the present dispensation; and inasmuch as they had no successors, 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 by the apostles, since they had no written copy to guide them; but when once the will of the Lord had been reduced to writing, and made available to the church as a whole, the services of inspired prophets would no longer be needed. (See, again, 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

The *evangelists* were those teachers who were supplied with spiritual gifts, and therefore suited for work in places where the gospel was unknown. (Cf. Mark 16; 17, 18.) The evangelists 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 able to teach and direct

the various congregations of the Lord's people, before they had a written record of the Lord's will. They correspond to our present-day elders. Vincent points out that no man is qualified 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 it should be equally evident that they have no need for inspiration today.

The scope and purpose of the work of inspired teachers, during the early days, of the "church, is carefully set forth in **verses 12 and 13**, namely, "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, the miraculous ministry in the early church was to continue, until the perfect standard was made known and realized. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8-10.) 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.) There will, of course, always be degrees in the progress of those who are striving for perfection in the service of God; but a miraculous ministry is not essential to their ultimate attainments: for the written word of God furnishes all they need. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 3, 4.)

Verses 14-16 continue to point to the final goal of Christian growth and development. Those who follow Christ should not be "childish" in their attitude; but should be constantly moving toward maturity. They should not be running after every new idea or teacher, and thereby be 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 one is to please God. If that which

has just been suggested is done, then the headship of Christ will be respected and honored, and the entire body, which is his church, will function according to his will; with the result that the "power within the body" will manifest itself in the growth and development which God expects. It is only in this way that the church can perform the work which has been ordained for it.

The Work of the Church As Seen in Practical Christianity

(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.

The words just quoted were written to people who were familiar with the elaborate rituals of the Jewish temple worship; and it was easy for them then, as it is for us now, to get the wrong impression regarding the true significance and value of religion. The prophet Amos had told the people of his day that they had sought to satisfy themselves with pleasing services; "but they had not been grieved for the affliction of Joseph." (See Amos 6: 1-6.) It has never been 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. (Cf. Mic. 6: 6-8; Rom. 12: 13; 15: 25, 26.)

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 there is to acceptable religion; but he does intend for us to get the idea that such is a practical demonstration of that which is necessary, if one is to please God. The descriptive terms "pure" and "undefiled" set forth the positive and negative qualities of acceptable religion; and

the inspired writer illustrates that which he is saying by examples of service in human relationships and personal integrity. This approach integrates our duty to God, to our fellow men, and to ourselves (cf. Tit. 2: 11, 12), with the result that a perfect whole comes into focus. This is Christianity at its best, in the relationships here considered, in that it makes love to God inspire correctness and kindness of conduct, while making correctness and kindness of conduct the manifestation of love to God.

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 about which Paul wrote may have been, the point to emphasize here is that the church, as such, 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 were both helpless and had no close relatives who were able to care for them. Paul tells us in verse 5, of the chapter from which this portion of the lesson text is taken, who is a *widow indeed*, and there is no question about the church's responsibility regarding such women. But it should be carefully observed that nothing is said here, or elsewhere, 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.

Questions for Discussion

What > s the subject of this lesson?
Repeat the golden text.
Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

What is the church of the New Testament and how did it come into being?
How are people called out of the world and separated unto fellowship in Christ?
In what way is the church of the New

Testament related to the eternal purpose of God in Christ?
What is the relationship of the church to Christ, throughout the Christian dispensation?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Paul write the words of the golden text?
Why should it be of great encouragement to the Lord's people?

- What is always involved in trying to rescue people from the kingdom of Satan?
- What can those who make such efforts always depend upon?
- What is meant by "stedfast" and "immovable"?
- Why are such traits as are indicated by them essential?

The Authority of Christ and His Commission

- In what way can we get a full statement of the Lord's commission to his disciples?
- What is involved in his final commission before returning to the Father?
- What work must Christ accomplish before he completes his assignment?
- Why was such sweeping authority given to Christ and what does it include?
- In what special way does the Lord's authority affect the church as such?
- What grand picture are we able to see as Christ spoke to his assembled disciples?
- What is the first task which the commission of Christ assigns to his followers?
- Who are the subjects of baptism and how do we know?
- Into what fellowship do baptized believers enter?
- What grand promise does Christ make to all his people?
- What are some of the things which this promise involves?

The Lord's Plan for the Growth and Unity of His Church

- Why were inspired people essential to the early church?
- What use does Paul make of the expression "earthen vessels"?
- What relationship do the Lord's apostles sustain to the church?
- Why is it impossible for his law for his people to be changed?
- Who were the prophets and what was their work?
- Why are prophets not needed in the church today?
- What was the principal work of the evangelists?
- Who were the pastors and teachers?
- Which of the groups listed in the text are needed in the church today and why?
- What was the scope and purpose of the inspired ministry of the early church?
- What is the final goal of Christian growth and development?

The Work of the Church As Seen in Practical Christianity

- Against what background did James write the words now before us?
- Why is it essential that Christians have a felling for their needy fellow beings?
- What is involved in the ministry outlined by James?
- What is the duty of the church toward the widows who are in it?

Lesson II—October 12, 1969

THE LORDS SUPPER

Lesson Text

Matt. 26: 26-29; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29; Acts 20: 7

26 And as they were eating, Je'-sus 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

October 6. M.	The Lord's Supper Instituted (Matt. 26: 17-30)
October 7. T.	The Lord's Supper Explained (1 Cor. 11: 21-29)
October 8. W.	The Lord's Supper Observed (Acts 20: 7-12)
October 9. T.	The Lord's Supper a Memorial (Luke 22: 14-22)
October 10. F.	The Lord's Supper a Communion (1 Cor. 10: 14-22)
October 11. S.	The Lord's Supper Abused (1 Cor. 11: 27-34)
October 12. S.	The Lord's Supper and Christ (Mark 14: 22-25)

TIME.—A.D. 29-57.

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 feast, which Jesus graciously ordained and authorized for his disciples; and 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 one could have been saved from eternal death, if it had not been for the death of Jesus 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.

It was during the last passover supper, which he ate with his disciples, that Jesus instituted the supper which bears his name; and in bringing this feast into being, he distinctly told his followers just how he wanted them to remember him. His own death for the sins of the human race was only a few days away; and it was that death which would have such a vital place in the thoughts and feelings of his disciples, not only then, but also throughout the dispensation which was about to begin. But Jesus did not then, and does not now, want his death to be remembered as the tragic end of a noble career, which might be hallowed by tears, such as are shed over a martyr's ashes; nor even as the crowning proof of his love for them. Instead, he wanted his death to be remembered as one which was essential for the remission of sins, the sins of people throughout the world and for all ages. It is only when Christians re-

alize that the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was the only possible way for human redemption, that the Lord's supper can have for them the meaning, which Jesus meant for it to have.

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. The enemies of Jesus thought that they had destroyed him, when they crucified him and saw to it that he was dead before his body was removed from the cross; but they did not understand God's plan. Jesus was not defeated in his death, but arose to the greatest victory the world has ever seen; and the Lord's supper also commemorates that crowning triumph.

It appears that Hall L. Calhoun realized the significance of this great institution, when he said that Jesus wanted to be remembered by his disciples. He wanted them to remember 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 forcefully proclaims, through the action of those who partake of it, that they 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 inasmuch as the testimony of two is stronger than the testimony 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 not only weakened, but it often has the opposite effect from that which was intended. This is true because there is a contradiction between that which they confess, while they are around the Lord's table, and their own daily living. May the Lord therefore help us all to make an honest effort to see to it that our worship and service in the cause of the Lord, may have their due effect in the lives of those who are about us every day. This is our greatest duty to Christ; and we cannot afford to do anything less.

The Golden Text

This portion of our lesson for today is in the regular text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

The Text Explained

The Memorial Feast Brought into Being

(Matt. 26: 26-29)

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. 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 new covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. 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.

It appears quite clear, from the gospel records, that Jesus instituted the Lord's supper at, or near, the close of the passover supper. This was the last passover supper which was eaten during the time that the law of Moses was in effect; and the Jewish leaders were, at that very time, making plans for the death of Jesus: since Judas had already bargained with them for his betrayal. Although the disciples were very close to their Lord, physically speaking, but they did not know, and neither could they understand, that which was taking place in his heart. John says that Jesus was troubled in spirit, and told them that one of their number would betray him, as has already been pointed out. (See John 13: 21.)

It was therefore in the midst of these solemn circumstances that

Jesus brought into being the supper which bears his name, and which he ordained for his disciples throughout the Christian dispensation. The bread which he used in instituting the feast was from the passover supper, and that means that it was unleavened bread; for no other kind of bread was permitted to be eaten during that Old Testament institution. (Cf. Ex. 12: 15-20; 34: 18; Deut. 16: 1-8.) This may not be conclusive proof that only unleavened bread may be scripturally used on the Lord's table; but it is safe to say that if people sincerely want to please the Lord, that is the kind of bread they will use; for there is no evidence whatsoever that he would be pleased with any other.

The particular type of drink, called the "fruit of the vine," which was used in the passover supper at the time of our lesson for today, was not specifically described, as in the case of the bread; but Bible students, such as Vincent, Edersheim, and others, say that it was wine, diluted with water, "generally in proportion of one part to two parts of water. There can be no reasonable doubt about the use of unfermented grape juice on the Lord's table; and that should satisfy the most discriminating mind, especially since Jesus spoke of it as the fruit of the vine. However, if it is true that Jesus used diluted wine, when he instituted the Lord's supper, then no

objection should be raised to that type of drink for the memorial feast.

When Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, it appears that the first thing he did was to take bread, bless it, and then give it to his disciples, with this exhortation, "Take, eat; this is my body." And then, taking a cup, and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it"; or, as Mark has it, "they all drank of it." This, of course, means that all of the disciples drank of the contents of the cup, rather than that they drank all that was in the cup. The original word for "give thanks" is *eucharistēo* which sometimes, although incorrectly, is used as a name for the Lord's supper, namely the *Eucharist*. Matthew says that Jesus *blessed* the bread, but that he *gave thanks* for the cup; but it appears quite evident that the two expressions have the same practical meaning, or that they were used interchangeably. This is made practically certain in Luke's record, where it is said, "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, . . ." (Luke 22: 19; cf. 1 Cor. 11: 23, 24.)

It should be observed that the term "cup" stands for its contents; for it is obvious that the disciples drank of that which was in the cup, rather than the cup itself. This fact is also made plain in 1 Corinthians 10: 14-22. And so, regardless of the number of containers which are used in the Lord's supper, there is still only *one* cup; for only the fruit of the vine, which is in the container or containers, can represent the blood of Christ. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the "cup" which the Lord's people drink is the fruit of the vine, rather than the container. When therefore Christians, the world over, or in any given place, drink of that which symbolizes the blood of Christ, they are all drinking of one cup. And what is true of the cup is also true of the bread; for there is only one bread which stands for his body. The "covenant" which Jesus referred to was the one which was predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 31: 31-34), and quoted and commented on by the writer of Hebrews (Heb. 8: 6-13).

The "elements" of which the Lord's supper is composed, are among the most perishable on the

earth; and yet they have stood the test of nearly two thousand years. A. B. Bruce, in commenting on the Lord's motive for instituting the supper now under consideration, says, "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 will remember all, for all it is the secret, the consummation, and the crown.'"

That which has just been said is true; for the death of Christ was a sacrificial, vicarious death. The paschal lamb of the Jewish passover was sacrificed as a call to remembrance of that night when God *passed over* every house in Egypt, on whose lintel and doorposts the blood of the slain animal had been placed. And in a similar manner, Jesus was the Paschal Lamb of God, whose shed blood made possible the deliverance of the human race from a far 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 the Lord's supper is designed to proclaim; and it is to enshrine this faith and deepen it into adorning love and joyful assurance, that Jesus commands, "This do in remembrance of me."

When Jesus said, "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," he was expressing the confident anticipation of his triumph over death. With the raising of the cross on the next day, it would appear that evil had succeeded in its efforts to destroy the young Galilean

teacher; but with calm and unruffled confidence, Jesus looked beyond the dark tomorrow, and saw the reality of the kingdom, which he had come to establish. And it was in that kingdom, which is also called the church, that he would drink a new and better cup with his disciples, not once, but throughout the dispensation which bears his name. McGarvey calls this the new method of drinking the fruit of the vine which, of course, signifies his spiritual communion with his followers, when they meet to celebrate the supper. (Cf. Matt. 18: 20.)

The Manner in Which We Should Regard the Lord's 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. And 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. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come. 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.

There are four records of the origin, nature, and purpose of the Lord's supper in the New Testament, namely, Matthew 26: 26-29; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 17-20; and 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26. The gospel writers gave this information as a part of their accounts of the life, works, and teaching of Christ; but it is obvious to any thoughtful readers that Paul introduced his statement regarding the Lord's supper for an entirely different reason. The church in Corinth, as one may easily see by reading First Corinthians, was badly divided; and when they met for their "love-feast"

(cf. Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2: 13) some of the brethren manifested their divisions and factions by eating in separate groups and at different times. Their shameful conduct brought forth the following rebuke from the apostle Paul:

But in giving you this charge, I praise you not [cf. 1 Cor. 11: 2], 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 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." (1 Cor. 11: 17-22.)

All four of the New Testament writers who deal with the Lord's supper give the historical facts regarding the institution; but only Paul takes into consideration the matter of Christian behavior on the part of those who assemble around the Lord's table. The sacred nature and purpose of the Lord's supper require that those who eat of it must manifest the spirit of Christ in their life and conduct. This is in complete harmony with the teaching of Christ regarding worship, as found in his conversation with the woman of Samaria. His words are, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4: 24.) One worships in spirit when he has a spiritual conception of God, and a spiritual communion with him; and he worships in truth when he has a truthful conception of God, and proceeds with his worship in harmony with the truth, which in this case is the revealed will of God.

People who live as they please during the week, and manifest an ungodly attitude toward their brethren, which often issues forth in scandalous behaviour with reference to them, cannot eat the Lord's sup-

per in an acceptable manner on the Lord's day. "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." The "unworthy manner" (*anaxiōs*) refers to the selfish and disgraceful attitude and conduct of those who divided themselves into cliques, and ate their *own supper* without regard to the welfare of the church, or the needs of the poor. People with that kind of a disposition cannot worship the Lord in spirit and truth; but they do, by their own sacrilege, become guilty of a crime against the body and the blood of the Lord.

Anaxiōs is not an adjective; it is, instead, an adverb of manner, denoting an unworthy or careless approach to the Lord's table. No one, in and of himself, is worthy to approach the table of the Lord, and partake of his supper. It is only through the mercy of God, involving one's redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, that any of us have that privilege; but we must remember that we ourselves are held responsible for the *manner* in which we endeavor to approach the table. It is one thing to teach that the Lord's supper is one of "the items of worship," which the Lord has ordained for his people, but something else to set forth the truth that worship involves responsibility on the part of the worshippers; the responsibility of worshipping God in spirit and truth. This is the lesson which is emphasized in this section of the text.

The only way for one to be certain that he is pleasing to the Lord, is for him to "prove himself," that is, test or try himself, just as he would a piece of metal to determine its genuineness. Every effective gospel preacher should prepare himself before he prepares his sermon; and in a similar manner, every worshipper must prepare himself before he assembles with others around the Lord's table. Or, to state the same thing in another way, there must be preparation before participation. There are many things which might contribute to one's eating and drinking in an unworthy manner, but it appears that the principal thing which Paul had in mind here was the unbrotherly

attitude which some of the Corinthian brethren manifested toward others of their brethren; and the lesson we should have impressed upon our minds is this: Anything which separates us from our brethren in Christ will, in all probability, separate us from the Lord. (Cf. Matt. 5: 23-26; 1 John 4: 19, 20.)

"For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." The marginal reading for "discern" is *discriminate*. The idea is that those who fail to recognize the body of Christ in the bread and fruit of the vine, for which they stand, will, by their action in going through the form of eating and drinking, eat and drink condemnation to themselves. But if they *recognize* the fact that they are symbolically eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ, they cannot, if they have any depth of spirituality, be indifferent toward, or at odds with, their brethren in Christ. Robertson notes that "eating the bread and drinking the wine as symbols of the Lord's body and blood in death probes one's heart to the very depths."

The Meeting of the Church in Troas

(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 city of Troas, located on the northwest coast of Asia Minor, has an interesting, if not a prominent, place in the history of the New Testament church. It was there that Paul and his company spent a night, on his second missionary journey, after being providentially hindered from preaching in other areas of that region, and were by the same process brought to the city now in question. It was during their night there that Paul had his vision regarding Macedonia. Luke joined the party there, and from there they sailed to Neapolis, the seaport city of Philippi. Later on, when the apostle found it advisable to leave Ephesus, because of unsettled conditions, he went to Troas, but was so disturbed that he could not take hold of the opportunity which was there for preaching the gospel.

(See Acts 20: 1f; 2 Cor. 2: 12, 13.) Paul's next visit to Troas, so far as the record is concerned, was at the time of this lesson; and the last mention of the city, in the New Testament, is in 2 Timothy 4: 13.

While the record does not say so specifically, most conservative Bible students look upon the breaking of bread, in this passage, as being the Lord's supper. This is also the only place in the New Testament which mentions the time, on the first day of the week, for its observance. This is an example of the practice of the early church, with apostolic approval; and it therefore has all the force of a specific precept. We are told by Jesus to observe the Lord's

supper, but no mention was made of the time for its observance. However, the general teaching of the New Testament with reference to the Lord's day, and the purpose of the Lord's supper, certainly give basis for thinking that the table of the Lord was spread each first day of the week. (Cf. 1 Cor. 16: 2, where the original has "every first day of the week.") The text now before us says that the meeting at Troas, for the purpose of breaking bread, was on the first day of the week; and if we follow their approved example, we will also meet, for that purpose, on the first day of the week.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Just what is the Lord's supper? Give reasons for your answer.

Discuss the purpose of the Lord's supper. When and under what circumstances was the Lord's supper brought into being? What does Jesus want to be remembered by this memorial feast?

What are some of the things which come into mind when the supper is properly observed?

How did the enemies of Jesus feel about his crucifixion?

What effect does Jesus want the celebration of the Lord's supper to have on his disciples?

What effect does the proper observance of the Lord's supper have on the world?

What should the Lord's people always try to do with reference to their own lives?

The Memorial Feast Brought into Being

What is known regarding the feelings of the disciples when Christ instituted the supper?

For how long does Jesus expect his people to observe the memorial feast and why?

What kind of bread was used at the time of its institution and what effect, if any, should that have on Christian people throughout the age?

In what does the fruit of the vine consist?

How did Jesus go about instructing the disciples as to the manner of observing the supper?

What is the difference between blessing the bread and giving thanks for it? Give reasons for your answer.

For what does the term "cup" stand in the Lord's supper? Give reasons for your answer?

How can it be said that there is "one cup" when many containers are used?

What is the nature of the "elements" of the Lord's supper?

What is meant by saying that Christ died a vicarious death?

In what way does Jesus drink the cup in the kingdom of his Father?

The Manner in Which We Should Regard the Lord's Supper

What was the over-all purpose of the gospel narrators in writing of the Lord's supper?

In what way does Paul differ from them in this respect and why did he write about it?

Why must Christians manifest the spirit of Christ when they eat the Lord's supper?

What does it mean to worship God in spirit and truth?

What is meant by attempting to eat the Lord's supper in an "unworthy manner"?

How does this differ from one's saying that he must be "worthy" to eat it?

How alone can people make certain that they do not eat in an unworthy manner?

What must the Lord's people always strive to do when they eat the memorial feast?

The Meeting of the Church in Troas

Discuss the place which Troas has in the history of the Lord's church?

Where was the city located and how did Paul and his company come to be there?

For what purpose did the brethren meet in Troas at the time of this lesson?

What reasons do we have for regarding the breaking of bread as being the Lord's supper?

Lesson III—October 19, 1969

THE CONTRIBUTION

Lesson Text

1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; 2 Cor. 8: 1-8; 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 Ti-tus, that as he had made a beginning 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.

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.—“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” (Acts 20: 35.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 21: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

October 13. M.....	Lord's Day Contribution (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2)
October 14. T.....	Grace of Giving (2 Cor. 8: 1-9)
October 15. W.....	Spiritual Blessing in Giving (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)
October 16. T.....	Rewards of Faithfulness (Mark 10: 23-31)
October 17. F.....	Right Use of Money (1 Tim. 6: 11-19)
October 18. S.	God's Rights Respecting Money (Mai. 3: 7-12)
October 19. S.....	True Riches (Luke 16: 9-13)

TIME.—A.D. 57.

PLACES.—Ephesus and somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Corinthian brethren.

Introduction

It appears from the record of the ministry of Paul that he was always interested in relieving the needs of the poor. (Cf. Acts 11: 27-30; Gal. 2: 1-10.) We do not know just exactly when this great man began to think about the great contribution which he envisioned for the poor in Jerusalem and Judaea, and which

he saw through to its conclusion; but we do know that it was prominent in his mind during his second great missionary journey, which began soon after the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15. (Cf. 2 Cor. 9: 1, 2.) It was during Paul's third missionary journey that he wrote the two Corinthian letters, and the ones

to the Galatians and Romans; and it is from these epistles that we learn the most of what we know about that contribution, that is, the contribution with which we are concerned in this study.

There is no evidence whatsoever to support the idea that Paul ever encouraged the matter of giving, just for the sake of giving; there was always some basic motive which he held before those whom he urged to give of their material means. This idea is based on the truth that one of the great tests of Christian character, is one's attitude toward his worldly possessions. (Cf. Mark 10: 17-22; Luke 12: 13-21.) The principle involved in the situations just referred to was clearly stated by Jesus in the following words: "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." (Matt. 6: 24.) Trust is a vital factor in pleasing God (cf. 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. This principle is also applicable with reference to one's fellow Christians. (Cf. 1 John 3: 14-18.)

It was the principle just referred to that Paul used so effectively in his efforts to raise a contribution for the poor saints in the homeland of the Jews. The churches from which he sought the money were made up

largely of Gentiles, along with some Jewish brethren who lived among them. Many of the early Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judaea had never been 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. Paul, of course, knew that he was right about his attitude toward the Gentiles, and his ministry among them had the approval of the apostles, and the leadership of the church, generally speaking (cf. Gal. 2: 6-10); still, he was unwilling to allow any of the brethren to feel as they did toward him, without making an effort to do something about it.

If one is willing to consider all the facts in the case, he will be able to see that it had long been Paul's conviction, that the feeling of resentment on the part of the Jewish brethren who felt that way about him could, to a large degree at least, be allayed by getting the Gentile brethren to supply funds to relieve the needs of the Jewish brethren in and around Jerusalem. And so, in keeping with this idea, the Gentile churches of three or four provinces—Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and probably Asia—were uniting their efforts in this endeavor. The brethren in these regions had been setting apart, for nearly two years, on each Lord's day that which they were able to contribute to this fund; and that which we are to study today will enable us to see the process at work.

The Golden Text

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." The apostle Paul had finished his three great missionary journeys, when the words which serve as the golden text for today's lesson were spoken; and he was hurrying to Jerusalem with the contribution which had been collected for the poor saints in that area. He wanted to reach the Jewish capital in time for the feast of Pentecost, and he also wanted to see, and have a short visit with, the elders of the church in Ephesus, with whom he had worked for some three years. The apostle, however, realized that

if he went to Ephesus himself, it would be difficult to have an audience with the elders, with so many others to see; and he therefore decided to call for the elders to meet him at Miletus. It was at the latter city that Paul delivered the address to the Ephesian elders, which ended with the words which serve as our golden text for today's lesson.

We have no way of knowing from what source Paul obtained the words of Jesus which he quoted; but we do know that he rescued them from oblivion, and made it possible for them to be available for use by the Lord's people, throughout the remainder of time before the

Lord comes again. It could have been that the Holy Spirit revealed the words to Paul; but, be that as it may, we have the words, along with the contents of his address on that occasion. It is interesting to note that Paul is the only apostle, or other inspired writer, outside the four who wrote the gospel narratives, who ever made a direct quotation from Jesus; and David Thomas calls attention to three important items which the words reveal regarding Christ and his teaching, namely, (1) The unrecorded portion of his words, which is to say that much of the teaching of the Lord was not recorded, cf. John 20: 30, 31; 21: 25. (2) The exalted character of his teaching, standing, as it does, in direct contrast with that of the world. (3) The unselfish nature of his life; for the words quoted are but a portrayal of his life.

There are in general two principal views of life, namely, (1) that of gain, and (2) that of service to oth-

ers. Gain, of course, can be with a view to helping others; but that is not the usual attitude of those whose aim is the acquisition of that which they do not possess. Many people whose desire is to acquire that which is not in their possession, not only want their gains for themselves, but also for use in making further acquisitions. But the other view, mentioned above, proposes to use every gift and every opportunity, in such a manner as to make them blessings to others. Paul's purpose in quoting the words of Jesus to the Ephesian elders, was to encourage them to follow his example of service to their fellow men. That had always been Paul's rule as a Christian; and in following that course, he was but imitating the teaching and example of Jesus. (Cf. Matt. 20: 28; 1 Thess. 2: 7-9.) The joy of seeking a selfish gain can never equal the satisfaction of serving others.

The Text Explained

Apostolic Direction for a Benevolent Contribution

(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. 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.

Any one who reads the passage just quoted should be able to see that the collection which Paul authorized to be taken, was for a specific purpose, or, which is the same thing, it was a *benevolent* contribution. The church in Corinth certainly had other financial obligations (cf. 1 Cor. 9: 1-14), and it is reasonable to suppose that other monies were made available for the treasury, by the Corinthian brethren, before the collection which we are to consider today was authorized. Or, to say the same thing in another way, the brethren had been giving of their means all along, in support of the work of the church in that city. A portion of that which one earns or possesses has always belonged to the Lord, and he expects his people to support that which he has authorized them to do.

But Christian people have an obligation regarding the welfare of their needy brethren, as well as others outside the fold of Christ (cf. Gal. 6: 10); and what better time could be found for a benevolent contribution, than when the congregation has assembled to worship God. It was pointed out in an earlier lesson that worship does not consist simply in the performance of certain acts; but is something which takes place in the heart—"the adoring reverence of the human spirit for the divine." This adds up to the fact that before there can be any true worship, the emotions, or feelings, must be aroused; and that is done by the knowledge of who and what God is, and what he has done for us. And so, as we pour out our hearts in praise and adoration to God, we must not be carried away to the extent that we are indifferent to the needs of our fellow men. (Cf. 1 John 3: 14-18; 4: 20, 21.) In the words of Mary Barrett,

Are you dwelling in the sunlight?
Is your path with roses strewn?
Do you walk with buoyant gladness
In the steps that you have hewn?
Have you reached the top of Pisgah,

Climbing always firm and true?

Don't forget that in the valley

There is some one needing you.

Thus, in addition to the basis obligations which the Lord's people have for the "furtherance of the gospel," and which they should never fail to meet, if indeed they are in position to do so, the Lord also gives his people the opportunity to demonstrate their love for him, and for their fellow man, by making extra contributions, such as the one now before us. Whether or not Paul's "order" to the Galatian churches was given orally or in writing, is not stated; but whatever may have been the method by which the information was conveyed to those churches, we may be sure that it was substantially the same as the directions contained in the passage now under consideration. (Cf. "so *also* do ye.")

If the reader really wants to know the facts regarding the contribution which the apostle Paul authorized for the first day of the week, he can easily see them; for there are, in verse 2, the apostolic answers to five questions, namely, (1) *When?* "Upon the first day of the week"—*every* first day of the week, according to the original: *kata mian sabbatou*. This definitely shows that the early church habitually met for worship on every first day of the week. The brethren doubtlessly met for worship at other times (cf. Acts 2: 46, 47; Heb. 10: 25), but the first day of the week was the time designated for the collection about which Paul was speaking. (2) *Who?* "Each one of you." Every Christian should have the opportunity of making his own contribution. Whatever the family as a whole is able to give should be divided up among them—husband, wife, and children—so each may share in the service, unless various members of the family have their own individual incomes. It is not proper for the husband, or some other member of the family, to do the giving for all, if they are present and are participating in the service. What would one think of a husband and father trying to sing for his family?

(3) *What?* "Lay by him in store." David Lipscomb, in commenting on this phase of the question, says, "Some contend that the

storing was to be done at home, but that would be incompatible with the idea 'that no collections be made when I come,' for if stored at home, it would have to be gathered when he came. It was to be separated at home from the amount not given, then cast into the treasury." (4) *How?* "As he may prosper." There are some professed Christians who try to evade this duty by saying that they do not know how much they have prospered. Such people apparently do not realize that they are impeaching the wisdom of God; for that is what *he* said for them to do. Any person who is responsible for earning a livelihood is under obligation to tell the Federal Government about his gains, or prosperity; and if he cannot do it by himself, he can always find some one to help him. And just so with his giving according to the commandment of the Lord. (Cf. Luke 19: 23.)

When one gives as he has prospered, he gives 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 give more into the Lord's service than he is giving, and will determine to be true with himself and with God in his answer, it will not be difficult for him to see just what Paul means by giving as one has prospered. 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," or, which is the same thing, that sufficient funds may be on hand to meet the needs in question, and that it will not be

necessary for time and effort to be given to fund-raising, when other matters should claim their attention. If congregations and individual Christians will follow Paul's instruction here, and heed the answers which he gives to these basic questions, there is little likelihood that they will go very far astray, in the matter of their giving to worthy causes. 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; 4: 17.) Vincent notes that "Christian beneficence is to be the outcome of a *settled principle*, not of an *occasional impulse*."

The Motive Behind Liberal Giving

(2 Cor. 8: 1-8)

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 riches of their liberality. 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. 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.

It is doubtful if anyone can render acceptable service to God, in the absence of proper motivation. Or, to state the same thing in another way, there must be a reason for any service which is pleasing to the Lord. This is what Vincent is saying, when he points out that Christian giving for others must result from a settled principle, rather than from an occasional impulse. There can be no greater motive for service to God and to others, than love which is, of course, one of the greatest principles on record. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 1-3.) Thus, when people who profess to follow the Lord will, first of all, try to determine that which God expects of them, and that which will please him; and then make up their minds that that is what they aim to do (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 9), they will find that their service, whatever it may be, will be a joy to them. (Cf. 1 John 5: 3.)

The Macedonian churches, about which we know, were those in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea; and it is interesting to observe that in no letter which Paul wrote to them, and which has come down to us (First and Second Thessalonians and Philippians) is there a warning against the temptations and perils of riches. (Cf. 1 Tim. 6: 10, 17-19.) *The Standard Bible Commentary—Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans* says 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 this general poverty, the churches had been made poor by persecution. (2 Thess. 1:

4.) This poverty put their Christian character to the proof, and Paul wishes the Corinthians to know, that they may be benefited by the example, how nobly the Macedonians endured the proof. Despite their afflictions they were so filled with the grace of God that their joy abounded and worked positively in the combination with their abysmal poverty, which worked negatively to manifest the extreme riches of their liberality.

"This is enough to show us that it is not necessary for churches or individuals to be wealthy, in order to be liberal givers. The poor brethren of Macedonia not only gave for the relief of others who were also poor; "they gave of their own accord;" and the giving was to such an extent that Paul, knowing of their own condition, evidently tried to restrain them. But, instead of lessening their efforts, they besought him with persistent entreaty that they might be allowed to exercise the grace of liberality which God had put into their hearts." (Cf. Phil. 2: 13.)

The secret of the great liberality of the Macedonian brethren is found in the fact that they first gave themselves to God, and then to his messengers through the will of God. When people have the right attitude toward the Lord and his work, there is no problem regarding the means which are necessary for the fulfillment of his purpose. And so, inspired by such a great example as that which was set forth by the

Macedonian brethren, Paul urged Titus to return to Corinth, and seek to complete the work of gathering an offering from the brethren of that city, a work which he had previously begun.

The apostle Paul speaks of "giving" as a grace, or, which is the same thing, a gift of the Spirit. He spoke of some of their endowments in his earlier letter to them, our First Corinthians; and here he urges them to abound in the grace of liberality, and make it outstanding among the other gifts by its perfection. The apostle does not mean to say that there is no commandment to give; he is, rather, urging them to demonstrate their motive for giving, namely, love for God and their needy brethren. Any one who is familiar with the Bible knows that a portion of one's time and possessions belongs to God. We do not give God that which is already his; our giving starts *after* we have discharged our duty to him and the work which he has authorized us to do.

The Ratio of Reaping Is Never Greater Than the Sowing

(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. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work.

When one reads 1 Corinthians 16:

1, 2, he reads that which the Lord wants his people to do, when they make a contribution, such as we are considering today; and when he reads the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians, he will learn of the principles which should guide one in raising such a benevolent fund. Webster defines a principle, as used in this lesson, 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 what is true in nature, is just as true in religion. However, when the over-all question of giving is duly considered, it will be seen that the amount which one gives is not always the determining factor in God's sight. But when one does his best, however little his gift may be, he will be honored by the Lord. (Cf. Mark 12: 41-44.) Albert Barnes thinks that Paul spoke as he did here to keep the Corinthians from supposing, that because their offerings were on a voluntary basis, they might give only from their superfluity; or, which is the same thing, their giving would not be sacrificial. God wants his children to imitate him; and if they will use what he gives them, he can and will multiply their seed for sowing, so that they can always engage in good work.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

What was Paul's attitude about ministering to the needy?

What was always behind his idea of giving for the benefit of others?

What teaching of Jesus supported the apostle's view of this question?

In what way is "trust" involved in this issue?

What is one of the best ways to determine one's attitude toward God?

Why did Paul want the Gentile churches to make the contribution of this lesson?

The Golden Text

When and under what circumstances did Paul quote the words of Jesus in this text?

What important lesson do we learn from them?

What are the two principal views of life which are generally seen in people today?

What is the usual outcome of each view?

Why should this knowledge be important to us?

Apostolic Direction for a Benevolent Contribution

For what purpose did Paul authorize this collection to be taken?

What other financial obligations did the church in Corinth have and how do you know?

What claim does God always have on that which one possesses?
 Why do the Lord's people have an obligation toward the welfare of the needy?
 Why do the Scriptures authorize a benevolent contribution on the first day of the week?
 What is worship and in what way is "giving" an act of worship?
 What must the Lord's people always guard against when they worship him?
 What specific order did Paul give regarding the benevolent contribution?
 What five questions does Paul answer in verse 2?
 What do we learn from this regarding the practice of the early church?
 Discuss each of the five answers which Paul gave regarding this contribution.

The Motive Behind Liberal Giving

Why is proper motivation always essential in the service to God?
 What is meant by giving according to a settled principle?
 What will a course which is guided by principle always lead people to do?
 Why was the example of the Macedonian Christians so inspiring?

Why did Paul cite their example to the Corinthians?
 What is essential for a congregation or an individual Christian to be a liberal giver?
 What was the secret of the Macedonian brethren's great liberality?
 In what sense is "giving" a grace?
 In view of the fact that a part of one's possessions already belongs to God, what lesson should we learn about our giving in his service?

The Ratio of Reaping Is Never Greater Than the Sowing

In what way are 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2 and chapters 8 and 9 of Second Corinthians related?
 In what sense is the term "principle" used in the statement, "The principles of giving"?
 What will always happen when the New Testament principles of giving are followed?
 What are some of these principles?
 What is Paul's lesson on "sowing and reaping"?

Lesson IV—October 26, 1969

PRAYER

Lesson Text

Matt. 7: 7-11; James 1: 5-7; 1 Thess. 5: 16-18

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone;

10 Or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

5 But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who give to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

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.—Matt. 6: 5-15.

Daily Bible Readings

- October 20. M....."Lord, Teach Us to Pray" (Luke 11: 1-4)
- October 21. T..... Humility in Prayer (Matt. 8: 5-13)
- October 22. W..... Persistence in Prayer (Mark 7: 24-30)
- October 23. T..... The "Model Prayer" (Matt. 6: 9-15)
- October 24. F..... Improper Prayer (Luke 18: 9-14)
- October 25. S..... Hypocritical Prayers (Matt. 6: 5-8)
- October 26. S..... Blessing through Prayer (James 1: 5-8)

TIME.—A. p. 27-60.

PLACES.—Mount Hattin, Jerusalem, and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, James, Paul, and those to whom they wrote.

Introduction

Those who are familiar with the teaching of the Scriptures are aware of the fact that prayer is one of man's highest privileges: his highest privilege is in God's speaking to him, through his word and his providence. It is natural for one to want to talk with those whom he loves; and it is good to know that we have that privilege when we love God. The activity which we call prayer belongs to the very heart of religion. The truth of the statement just made is seen in the fact that 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. Daniel, David, and other Old Testament worthies, prayed three times a day (Dan. 6: 10; Psalm 55: 17), while Jesus, not only arose early in the morning to pray; he frequently spent the entire night in communion with his heavenly Father. (Cf. Mark 1: 35; Luke 6: 12.)

There are always urgent reasons for studying the meaning of prayer; for prayer is either the primary fact in our lives here upon the earth, or it is our worst delusion. Prayer is not merely a form to be engaged in from time to time; it is, instead, something which meets the deepest needs of the human soul. Prayer

has been described as every man's supreme effort to find the right answer to the meaning of life. This exercise has also been spoken of as communion with an Ideal Companion; and with this view of the question in mind, it is easy to see that prayer is not primarily a matter of our talking, God's listening, and then giving an answer, as is so commonly assumed.

Some of our best Bible students have noted that no subject of the Scriptures has greater prominence in God's revealed message to the human race, than prayer; and yet many who read the Bible are apparently growing more and more indifferent to its blessings and privileges. The tendency of the times seems to be away from prayer. Nichol and Whiteside have pointed out that perhaps no one can be entirely free from his environment; but to keep the prayerless spirit of the present age from overwhelming us, we should diligently read the Bible, and in that way associate ourselves with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the praying men and women of the Scriptures—and then pray ourselves. Prayer is as vital to the Christian as the air which he breathes.

The Golden Text

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working"

It is easy to see, from that which was said in the golden text, 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 "attachments" 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

question; and the subject 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 learn 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 aim 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. A well-rounded prayer will contain *praise* to God, and this is the worshipper's response to the character and dignity of God, as he learns of them from the Holy Scriptures. It is inconceivable that any well-informed and thoughtful Christian will fail to adore his heavenly Father. Prayer also contains *thanksgiving* to God, that is, the giving of thanks for the blessings of life, and for the privilege of prayer itself. *Confession* to God also belongs to prayer. This includes both our acknowledgment of God himself (cf. Heb. 11: 6), and the confession of our sins. We must always keep in mind the fact that sin cannot remain in God's presence. *Petition* to God is the request which the worshipper makes to him for his blessings. This is enough to show, let it be repeated, that prayer is not altogether the asking for something.

There are some important things

which should be kept in mind, if we would have our prayers effective in God's sight. In the first place, the text says that the supplication of a *righteous man* avails much in its working. We learn from both the Old Testament and the New Testament that the righteous man is the 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 that which is contained in God's law for him; will seek spiritual companionship; and he will, as a result, be characterized 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

Prayer As a Factor in Human Behavior

(Matt. 7: 7-11)

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

It will probably help us to see more clearly the significance of this section of the lesson text, if we look at it from the standpoint of *prayer as a scientific investigation*. Some one has said that the greatest lack in the average Christian life is the absence of the science of the spiritual. Religious experience, with many of us, is more or less haphazard and unrelated. We do not seem to realize that our greatest blessings are to be carefully and systematically sought after. Suppose we viewed our material blessings, as we usually do those which are spiritual?

Science, as we know it today, is forever asking, seeking, knocking; and it is in this sense that we should view the spiritual realm. When the activities just referred to are applied to the spiritual domain, they at once indicate a recognition that it is only through them, that we can attain the highest good possible for us in this life. It would not be out of place to speak of asking, seeking, knocking as the fundamental laws of prayer.

While it is possible that Jesus meant to use the terms "ask," "seek," and "knock," as synonyms, repeated for emphasis; but it is hardly probable that he did. It is more likely that there is in them the idea of progress. With this latter view in mind, let us consider the probable significance of each of the three words. (1) *Ask*. This is a literal request; and it represents the beginning of the progressive nature of prayer. Furthermore, it is easy to see that the one who must ask is also dependent. And to, the idea of belief in a personal God is also involved—a God with whom we can have fellowship, and one who can and does answer the prayers of his children. (2) *Seek*. This obviously is a figurative expression, and indicates a persistent effort on the part of the petitioner—"seek in order to

find." One must always be willing to do his part toward getting his prayers answered. (3) *Knock.* This, too, is a figurative expression, and suggests perseverance. (Cf. Acts 12: 13-16.) No one can read the teaching of Jesus, without realizing that importunity is a definite feature of prayer. (Cf. Luke 11: 5-13; 18: 1-8.) Many of our prayers are uttered with too much thoughtlessness and indifference; so much so that we frequently forget even the subject of them. If true believers will but take the time to review their lives, they will find but few things for which they earnestly prayed—sought after "scientifically"—that were denied them by God. (Cf. Phil. 4: 6, 7; Psalm 84: 11.) The scientific spirit is forever asking, seeking, and knocking.

After having showed his disciples their part in approaching God, Jesus next reveals the attitude of God toward them; and what was true of the people then is also true today. If we ask as he directs, he is willing to bestow; if we seek, he will provide the answer to the quest; and if we knock, he will open the door to that which we need. In the matter of living, and especially in our attitude toward one another, no one can please the Lord who does not act in harmony with his will. But when we consider the fact that the sinful world in which we live presents problems and throws obstacles in the way, which are too great for men in their own strength to solve and overcome, we are sometimes likely to ask, "How can we live as God directs in a world like this?" The answer is found in the text now under consideration, namely, ask, seek, knock; and when that is done, we put ourselves in touch with final Wisdom and ultimate Power, so that we are prepared to deal with any situation which may come before us. Thus, it is clearly seen that scriptural prayer is a major factor in human behavior.

When we study the teaching of the Bible regarding the relationship between God and man, we are impressed with two major viewpoints, namely, (1) the contrast between God and man, Isa. 55: 8, 9; 59: 1, 2; and (2) their kinship, Rom. 8: 16, 17; 1 John 3: 1-3. The Bible keeps these truths together in its teaching;

and they should always be blended in our faith. The first idea evokes in us humility which bows the soul in awe, and causes us to realize our undone condition without God. The second point of view inspires us with a sense of dignity and value of the soul, and of a destiny beyond our fondest dreams.

Jesus, of course, always held these two truths in perfect balance; but in the lesson now before us he rested his teaching upon the kinship of God and man. Or, he wants his disciples to see what God is, and what is his attitude toward his people. If earthly fathers are good to their children, will not the heavenly Father be good to his? If earthly fathers do not disappoint and mock the hunger (needs) of their children, can any one expect the heavenly Father to disappoint and deceive his? And if earthly fathers are discriminating in their gifts to their children, withholding harmful things and bestowing only good things, will not the Heavenly Father do as much?

But the whole force of the argument which Jesus is making in the text now before us, is to be found in the words "how much more." If we as earthly parents, selfish and sinful as we are at best, know how to deal kindly with our children, *how much more* must he who is both infinitely wise and good deal with his children, who have been redeemed by the blood of his only begotten Son, and who are faithfully endeavoring to please him? No one who understands the teaching of the Bible regarding prayer will, for a moment, think that prayer is a means of altering the will of God. On the contrary, prayer is one of the chief means of getting the will of God done; for when rightly engaged in, it brings us closer to God, and more in harmony with his will, so that he can do more with and for us than otherwise he could. Some one has called prayer the boat-hook which brings, not the land to the boat, but the boat to the land; and there is no way of knowing how much it will do for us until we try it.

Homer Putnam Reeves notes that "prayer is one of the most distinct and delightful privileges accorded the Christian. Both history and personal experience testify elo-

quently of the great power which lies in the supplication of a righteous man. Prayer is our most precious means of connecting with Divine Power. Somewhere and somehow, an unlimited source of vitalizing power exists. Man is the motor that can use this intangible power. Prayer is the feed line or conduit that connects man with the great source of supply. If we would tap the great treasury of well-being and draw freely from the great storehouse of heaven's bounty, it must be through the channel of prayer. The well of Divine Power is deep, and without prayer we would have no sweep by which to draw it up and put it to human use."

God Will Answer the Prayers of His People

(James 1: 5-7)

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.

James, in the preceding paragraph of the chapter from which this section of the lesson text is taken, speaks of the part that temptation plays as one travels on toward Christian maturity. His words are, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." (James 1: 2-4; cf. Heb. 12: 2; 2 Cor. 12: 7-10; Rom. 5: 3-5.) Temptations are the common lot of men, and those who are faithful to God must make every effort to see to it that they are not overcome by the trials which come their way. But one must have access to wisdom from above, if he is to be successful in his fight against the evil one; and that is what James says that he should pray for.

But it should be noted that the wisdom about which James speaks is not factual knowledge, which is available to those who seek for it through study, observation, and ex-

perience. Wisdom, as used here, is the moral ability, which enables its possessor, not only to understand something of the divine purpose in temptations and the Christian life; but also the moral discernment which enables the tempted child of God to overcome. Or, to state the same thing in another way, wisdom, as used in the text now before us, may be defined as good judgment, which is essential to the disposition which the Christian makes of the temptations to which he is subjected, in his effort to remain true to God. It is the ability to make the proper decisions, when trials do come upon us. (Cf. Acts 6: 3; Col. 4: 5; James 3: 13, 17, where the same original word is found.)

God, who is always faithful, has promised help for his children in time of need, as may be seen from the following statement: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 13.) "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in the time of need." (Heb. 4: 15, 16.) Trials are sometimes necessary, in order to develop steadfastness; but if we will ask God for wisdom to meet them, they will never be able to overthrow us, or keep us from being "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." It should also be noted that God never reproaches his children for asking him for help, nor manifests any displeasures when they cry to him in time of need.

It has been pointed out repeatedly that no one can please God, who does not have faith; and the faith which is essential is that which recognizes the truth that God does exist, and which accepts the truth that he will do that which he has promised. (See Heb. 11: 6.) The term "doubting," as used in the text now before us, does not refer to unbelief, in the popular sense of the

term; but to a state of mind which is at odds with itself, or, which hesitates. (Cf. Acts 10: 20.) Hesitation *can* be the balance between faith and unbelief; and it usually leans toward the latter.

To ask in faith, then, implies a state of mind, in which a man not only believes in the existence of God, but in which his moral character is taken into account, and the evidences of his willingness to reward the petitioner is acknowledged. Or, it is belief in the beneficent activity of God, as well as in his personality. Such faith relies upon God, and confidently expects that that which is asked for will be granted; and it is in sharp contrast with the doubteminded man, who is unstable in all his ways. (See James 1: 8.) The hesitation between faith and unbelief is compared to a surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. The surge of the sea has no stability, but is at the mercy of the wind. (Cf. Eph. 4: 14; Rom. 4: 20, 21.) "That man" is emphatic, and has a slight contemptuous ring. It is true that such a person does receive gifts from God, which are common to all men (cf. Matt. 5: 45); but he does not receive anything from his Maker for which he makes a specific request.

The Way Christians Ought to Pray

(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.

The people who have genuine faith in God are the people who can rejoice always, and who find great delight in communing with their heavenly Father. Or, to say the same thing in another way, only people who pray as the Bible teaches that they should, can understand the injunctions which are contained in this section of the lesson text. People who do not trust God for that which he has promised his children, will find it difficult to pray often, to say nothing of *without ceasing*.

The words which Paul wrote contain the same general idea, as those used by Jesus, when he taught that the Lord's people "ought always to pray." (See Luke 18: 1.) These

and similar passages make it plain that prayer, so far as the Lord's people are concerned, is expected to be both universal and continuous. It is relatively easy for one to see the general truth which the passages just referred to contain; but it is not so easy to put the lesson which they teach into practice. What does the New Testament mean by saying that Christian people should pray without ceasing? or that they should pray always?

It should be obvious to any thoughtful person that the inspired teaching does not specify that one should always be engaged in the specific act of prayer, as that term is generally understood; for if that were true there would, of course, be no time left for the other duties which the Lord has enjoined upon his people. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19, 20; Acts 2: 42.) It goes without saying that there should be regular times for prayer, just as there should be regular times for Bible study, and other acts of worship and service; but the truth of the passage now before us still remains, namely, that we should pray without ceasing.

It has already been pointed out in this lesson that prayer may be described as communion with an Ideal Companion; and with this view of the subject, it is easy to see that prayer is not primarily a matter of our talking, God's listening, and then answering, as is so generally assumed. Prayer, as used in the text now before us, is more of an atmosphere, than an act; more of an attitude, than a deed, more of a spirit, than a specific thing which is done. There are indeed times when we should let our requests be made known unto God (cf. Phil. 4: 6, 7); but we can hold ourselves in tune with him at all times. We should, in fact, expose the whole range of our lives to our Maker and heavenly Father, and thereby seek to allow him to express himself through us. One does not always have to be talking to a companion, in order to have fellowship with him; but we do have to try to maintain his favor at all times. If we truly want God's will to be done, then that will certainly include his will in our lives; and if we are continuously endeavor-

oring to keep ourselves within the scope of God's purpose for us (cf. Rom. 8: 28), it will be our constant

aim, prayer, and effort, to live as his word directs that we should. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 9, 10.)

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of today's lesson.

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

How should the Lord's people feel about the subject of prayer?

In what way did many of the people of the Bible times regard prayer?

What is the basic meaning of the activity which we call prayer?

Why do many Christian people apparently place little emphasis on the practice of prayer?

What is the best way to get people interested in prayer?

The Golden Text

What kind of emphasis does James place on the practice of prayer?

What is one of the great hindrances to the practice of prayer?

What is one of the most frequent mistakes which is made regarding prayer?

What does a well-rounded prayer contain?

Whose prayer is referred to as one which avails much?

Why is this true?

Prayer As a Factor in Human Behavior

In what sense is prayer a scientific investigation?

Why is this an important question for every child of God?

How does science go about reaching its goal and why is this a good way to illustrate the prayer-life of a child of God?

What did Jesus probably mean when he urged his disciples to ask, seek, and knock?

Discuss each of these terms as they are related to one's prayer-life.

What attitude does God manifest toward his praying children?

In what sense, then, is prayer a factor in human behavior?

Wherein lies the force of the argument which Jesus makes regarding the relationship of the petitioned and the petitioners?

In what way do the prayers of Christians affect God, insofar as his will is concerned?

Why, then, is prayer so important to the child of God?

God Will Answer the Prayers of His People

Why did James write the words of this section of the lesson text?

Why do Christian people need wisdom in their fight against temptations?

What is the meaning of wisdom, as used in the passage now under consideration?

Why do the children of God have a right to expect help from their heavenly Father?

Why is faith so essential in calling upon him for help?

What does it mean for one to ask in faith?

Who is the "doubter" and why doesn't he receive an answer to his prayers?

The Way Christians Ought to Pray

Who are the people who can rejoice always and what does that mean?

Why, apparently, do so many people find it difficult to pray?

Why is prayer for the Lord's people both universal and continuous?

What does it mean for one to pray without ceasing?

Why is it possible for one to do this and yet not be engaged in the specific act of prayer all the time?

What lesson do we learn from this regarding the nature of prayer?

Lesson V—November 2, 1969

GROWTH THROUGH STUDY

Lesson Text

Col. 2: 6; 2 Tim. 3: 14, 15; Eph. 6: 10-18

6 As therefore ye received Christ Je'-sus the Lord, *so* walk in him.

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.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*” (2 Pet. 3: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Pet. 1: 5-8.

Daily Bible Readings

October 27. M.....	Growth in Grace and Knowledge (2 Pet. 3: 18)
October 28. T.....	Growth in Faithfulness (John 15: 1-10)
October 29. W.....	Knowledge of the Law (Deut. 6: 4-12)
October 30. T.....	Teaching God's Law (Neh. 8: 1-10)
October 31. F.....	Growth in Knowledge (Col. 1: 9-18)
November 1. S.....	Growth in Love (Phil. 1: 1-11)
November 2. S.....	Delight in God's Law (Psalm 1: 1-6)

TIME.—A.D. 62-68.

PLACE.—Rome.

PERSONS.—Paul and those to whom he wrote.

Introduction

People who are redeemed by Christ are born into the church; and they are referred to at the beginning as babes in Christ, (cf. 1 Cor. 3: 1; 1 Pet. 2: 2.) The Lord, however, does not want his people to remain in perpetual babyhood, as may be seen by reading the following: “Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.” (1 Pet. 2: 1, 2.) The ultimate state of Christian experience is manhood, and that can be achieved only by following the fundamental laws of growth. The apostle Paul makes it plain that God expects his people to become fullgrown men and women in his service. (Read Eph. 4: 11-16; Heb. 5: 11-14.)

The fundamental laws of growth are (1) *vital force*. A plant, for example, cannot grow, unless it is rooted in its native soil, and surrounded by a wholesome atmosphere. (2) *Wholesome food which meets all the requirements of the body in question*. This is essential, not only for growth and development, but also for the repair of that which is continuously wasting and wearing. (3) *Active use of all our*

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.

powers. The duties which have been ordained for us were not arbitrarily chosen. Each one is designed to exercise and strengthen one or more of our spiritual members. (4) *Periods of rest*. All living things need sleep; and God has provided rest periods for our spirits. These basic laws, which are fairly easy to comprehend, are within the reason of every responsible child of God; and unless they are utilized, the growth which God both expects and requires will not be in evidence.

But the particular growth which we are to consider in today's lesson is that which comes as the result of study. The term “study” is defined by *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* as the “application of the mind to the acquisition of knowledge, as by reading, investigation, or reflection.” The English word “study” occurs only twice in the entire American Standard Version of the Bible, once in the Old Testament (Eccles. 12: 12), and once in the New Testament (1 Thess. 4: 11). The marginal reading for study in the latter passage is *ambitious*, which suggests the idea of making it one's aim. (Cf. Rom. 15: 20; 2 Cor. 5: 9, the only other two instances of the word's occurrence in the New Testament.

The King James Version of the Scriptures has the word "study," in addition to the two instances mentioned above, in one other place, namely, 2 Tim. 2: 15, which reads as follows: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The original word for "study" in the passage just quoted is *spoudazo*, and it means, according to Arndt-Gingrich, to *be zealous* or *eager, take pains, make every effort*. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1:5.) While the word now before us is nowhere rendered *study* in the American Standard Version

of the New Testament, it certainly does indicate the spirit which should characterize those who seek to grow through study. Wuest translates 2 Timothy 2: 15 in these words: "Bend every effort to present yourself to God, approved, a workman unashamed, expounding soundly the word of the truth." There is altogether too much carelessness in dealing with God's word, on the part of too many professed Christians; and it is for this reason that it can be truthfully said that "many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep." (Cf. Heb. 5: 11-14.)

The Golden Text

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The word "but," with which the passage just quoted begins, indicates a contrast between that which has been said, and that which is about to be said. Verses 8-13 give a description of the last day of history, and, beginning with verse 14, we have the immediate context of the passage which serves as the golden text of today's lesson. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things [that is, the things mentioned in the preceding paragraph], 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 New Testament repeatedly refers to Christian character as a matter of growth. Hastings notes that it sometimes indicates that the growth is architectural—the growth of the building; sometimes it is psy-

chological—Christ being the head, and his people growing up into him in all things; and 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. Some one has said that the capacity for growth is that which, more than anything else, distinguishes one mind from another. And if one will look carefully at the context, he will be able to see why it is imperative that we grow. The sins of ignorance and unstedfastness can destroy, just as surely as those wrongs which are deliberately committed.

The growth enjoined, in the passage now under consideration, is not growth *into* the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but, being already in his favor and possessing some knowledge of him, we are to continue our growth in that grace and knowledge. (Cf. 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) The soul of man is the most important part of him; because it came directly from God, and has a direct connection with him. But notwithstanding its immortality, the soul must continue to grow, if the blessings which it is capable of enjoying, and which the Lord has provided for it, are to be received; and, like all other growth, as already noted, it must be according to the fundamental laws which God gave to regulate all such development. These basic laws are not difficult to discover;

and any one who is willing to abide by them, will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Grace is

favor, and knowledge is the information which we may gain through the study of God's revealed will.

The Text Explained

The Vital Center of the Christian's Life

(Col. 2: 6)

As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him. The Colossian brethren had been taught the truth regarding Christ (cf. Col. 1: 7), and they had received it; and here the apostle exhorts them to continue in the way which they had started. Or, which is the same thing, Paul wanted those brethren to hold fast that which they had learned regarding the Lord, and to build their whole life upon it. The idea which the apostle was endeavoring to teach the brethren in Colossae is expressed in verse 7, the one immediately following this section of the lesson text. "Rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." This is a practical application of that which is said in verse 6.

It is not out of order just here to consider some of the pertinent facts regarding the manner in which the Colossian brethren received Christ; because that which was true of them is also true of us, and of any one who becomes a follower of the Lord. To receive Christ is, first of all, *an act of the mind*. (Cf. Acts 17; 11, 12.) This means that they were not blinded by prejudice, or imprisoned by bigotry. Those people did not refuse to think, but opened the windows and doors of their minds, so that the light and the glory which were without might come in and illuminate them. (Cf. 2 Cor. 4: 5, 6.) The *feelings* of the Colossians were also involved in their acceptance of Christ. This means that they allowed their feelings, which had been aroused by the gospel message, to urge them to respond to the divine love which had been manifested to them. Their *will* also, when they realized their lost and undone condition, prompted them to put away everything which does not please the Lord, and gladly do that which he requires. (Cf. Acts 2: 41.) And when all of this had been done, their conscience gave

them the assurance that all was well with them. (Cf. 1 John 3: 19-21.) The sum of all of this is the "heart" of man.

All who receive Christ in the manner indicated in the preceding paragraph, are under obligation to allow him to reign in their hearts (cf. Rom. 6; 16-23); or, which is the same thing, they must order their lives according to his will. Alford quotes Bisping as saying that true faith is a spiritual communion: for in faith we receive not only the doctrine of Christ, but himself, into our lives; and in faith he dwells in us. We cannot separate Christ, as Eternal Truth, from his teaching. The practical meaning of all of this is the translation of all that Christ and his inspired teachers have taught regarding the Christian life. (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.)

Hold Fast to the Inspired Word

(2 Tim. 3: 14, 15)

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 of the Old Testament times, and it is also true in this age of the world. Jesus, as we have seen before, made it plain to his disciples that they were to teach all nations; and then, if and when that teaching was accepted, they were to baptize the penitent believers into the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That would make Christians out of them; but the teaching must continue: "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Timothy had been taught the truth, both with respect to the law of Moses and the

gospel of Christ. This portion of the lesson text, along with the entire book of Second Timothy, was addressed to the younger man, 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, namely, "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." (See 2 Tim. 3: 13, 14.)

Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him the things of the Old Testament period, and that accounted for his knowing the "sacred writings" from his childhood. It appears that Timothy, and probably his mother and grandmother, were converted during Paul's first missionary journey; and it was during the apostle's second such journey, that the young man was chosen to accompany the missionaries on their preaching mission. (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 Timothy 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.)

The Need for Growth and Development Illustrated

(Eph. 6: 10-18)

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. 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. 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. 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; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall

be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

As life moves forward, there comes to most of us a clearer view of its meaning and intense importance. We are led, more and more, to realize that we are surrounded by many strange and hidden alien forces, and are harassed by numberless unseen foes. We are also made to realize that the closer we try to live to the Lord, the greater is our danger of being assaulted by the evil one. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 12; 1 Pet. 4: 12-19.) This is true, because Christ and the world are diametrically opposed to each other. There is a life and death struggle between them; and this means that every person must take his stand either for or against Christ (cf. Matt. 12: 30); but it is good to know that Christ and those who share their destiny with him will ultimately win the struggle. (Read Rev. 20: 1-15.)

If one will read Paul's prayer for the people to whom he wrote (Eph. 3: 14-19), it will be easier for him to see what the apostle meant by being "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might." The life which pleases God is not that which observes outward forms only, but that which is characterized by purity and Christlike holiness in the inward man. It has been frequently stated, and is often heard now, that the spiritual aspect of life is in constant danger of extinction through the pressure of material influences. One has only to read the first chapter of Romans, in order to see what is meant by the statement. Not only did people then, but they still do, exchange the truth of God for a lie, and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever; and because they refuse to have God in their knowledge, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting.

When Paul says that "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood," he makes it plain that the Christian

warfare is not on a human level. If this conflict were on such a level, then human strength and ingenuity could be relied upon in waging it. (Cf. John 18: 36.) But as it is, our fight is against "the wiles of the devil" in general, and against his lesser powers, as they struggle against the right under his leadership. (Cf. Dan. 10: 13, 20.) We learn from Col. 1: 16; 2: 10 that all principalities and powers are under Christ; but it is evident from the passage now under consideration, that some mighty spirits are in direct opposition to the Lord. They have rebelled against God, and are following the devil in trying to alienate as many of God's creatures from him as possible.

F. F. Bruce notes that "the leader of these hostile powers is referred to by Paul in 2 Cor. 4: 4 as 'the god of this age,' who has blinded the minds of unbelievers to the light of the gospel. [Cf. Eph. 2: 2.] The present world-order as organized in rebellion against God remains under the opposition of these powers; only in Christ can men gain the victory over them and be released from their grasp. (1 John 5: 19.) The appearance of Christ on earth was the signal for an unprecedented outburst of activity on the part of the realm of darkness controlled by these world-rulers, as though they knew that a mortal threat was being presented to their dominion. . . . Against such 'spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' the Christian must be equipped with the panoply of God if he is to withstand them successfully."

If we count prayer as a part of the Christ armor, then there are seven parts, all of which are named by Paul in the section of the text now before us. (1) "*Having girded your loins with truth*" The girdle of the Roman soldier, who was evidently in the mind of the apostle Paul when he wrote this letter, was not worn simply as an ornament, but as an essential part of his equipment. The girdle, when placed around his loins, supported his sword, and was useful in keeping his armor and his clothing in place. The truth, with which the Christian soldier is to be girded, is God's entire revelation, which came through Jesus Christ and his apostles, as they were

guided by the Holy Spirit. The application of this part of his equipment to the soldier of the Lord, is with reference to the state of his heart. (Cf. John 8: 31, 32.)

(2) "*Having put on the breastplate of righteousness.*" This part of the soldier's armor, as its name indicates, was worn over his breast, and served to protect his vital organs. Paul uses the term "righteousness" here in the sense of moral rectitude, or correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting. (Cf. Prov. 4: 23; 1 Thess. 5: 8; 1 John 3: 7, 10.) When people do that which is right, they have the assurance of God's protection, both in this world, and in that which is to come. (Cf. Matt. 28: 20; Rom. 8: 28, 31-39.) There is nothing which can take the place of being and doing right in the Christian's struggle against the enemies of truth and righteousness.

(3) "*Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*" The soldier who makes a determined stand against the enemy of the cause which he represents, must have his feet protected; for with out such protection, he could not move with quick and certain steps. (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 insures a spirit of courageous readiness for the battle against the host of evil. This state of mind is produced by the gospel, which is the gospel of peace. (Cf. Rom. 5: 1-5.) This, incidentally, is another reason for intensive Bible study; for without this no one can be properly shod.

(4) "*Taking up the shield of faith.*" The word "withal" means then, besides, or in addition to; and so, in addition to those parts of the armor which are worn on the body, an essential part of the Roman soldier's equipment was his shield. The shield which the Romans used was oblong in shape, and was large enough to afford protection of the whole body. The shield was usually 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 and confidence (cf. Heb. 11: 6), which

makes him sensitive to holy influences which neutralize and defeat the power of temptation and other evil influences which beset the child of God. Genuine faith enlists the help of God in overcoming these "fiery darts of the evil one." (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13; 2 Pet. 2: 9; James 1: 2-8.)

(5) and (6) "*Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*" It is essential to a proper understanding of this part of the Christian soldier's equipment, that we recognize the fact that a different word is introduced here, as well as a difference in grammatical construction. The word for "take" (*dēchomai*) in verse 17 is different from the term "take" (*analambano*) in verses 13 and 16. Verse 16 has the participial form, while verse 17 has the direct imperative. The idea in verse 17 is that the Christian soldier is to *take up* or *receive* something from some one else; in the preceding verses, that is, verses 13 and 16, he is exhorted to do something himself, that is, something which he can

do, namely, gird his loins, put on the breastplate, shoe his feet, and take up the shield. But when it comes to the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, they must be received from the Divine side. The knowledge of salvation, which can come only from the Lord (cf. Eph. 2: 8; Tit. 3: 5), enables the Christian soldier to hold up his head, with joy and confidence, as the Scriptures continue to assure of favor and acceptance in the sight of God. The sword of the Spirit is described as the word of God; and it is the weapon which the Spirit himself has forged and made available to the soldier of the cross. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

(7) "*With all prayer and supplication.* . . . Prayer and supplication do not indicate two different kinds of praying. *Prayer*, as used in the text, appears to be general, while *supplication* is specific; prayer covers the entire ground of our communion with God, while supplication has reference to the specific requests which we make. (Cf. Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why are Christians, in their early stages, referred to as babes in Christ?
What provisions are made for their growth and development?
What are the fundamental laws of growth?
What is "study" and why is it referred to as a means of growth?
In what way may the spirit of study be described?

The Golden Text

What is the significance of the first word of the golden text?
In what are the Lord's people to grow?
Under what figures is growth set forth in the New Testament and why?
What happens to people when they continue to grow as they should?
What are "grace" and "knowledge"?

The Vital Center of the Christian's Life

In what way had the Colossian brethren received Christ?
How does any one receive him and how is this related to the heart of man?
What exhortation does Paul give to those who did receive Christ?
How does one walk in Christ?
What obligation always follows the reception of Christ?
In what sense is the term "walk" used in this section of the lesson text?

Hold Fast to the Inspired Word

What is true regarding all religion which is acceptable to God?
What instruction did Christ give to his disciples regarding it?
In what way was Timothy fitted to receive the religion of Christ?
What was Paul's purpose in writing these things to Timothy?
What great advantage did Timothy enjoy as a child?
What did Paul mean by the "sacred writings"? Give reasons for your answer.
How were they able to make Timothy wise unto salvation?

The Need for Growth and Development Illustrated

What important lesson does one learn as his life moves forward?
Why is the opposition of the evil one greater as one lives closer to Christ?
What choice does every one have to make with reference to Christ in this respect?
What does Paul mean by being strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might?
What great danger always threatens the spiritual life?
What form does this departure from God often take?
Wherein does the conflict of the faithful in Christ lie?
Why will not human strength and ingenuity suffice for the struggle?
What was the reaction of the opposition when Christ came into the world?

In what does the equipment which is available to the Christian soldier consist?
What method did Paul use in impressing

these things upon the Lord's people?
What difference is made between the human and the Divine with reference to the soldier's need?

Lesson VI—November 9, 1969

ACCEPTABLE PRAISE IN WORSHIP

Lesson Text

Matt. 26: 30; Eph. 5: 18-20; Col. 3: 16, 17; Heb. 2: 11, 12; Amos 6: 1-5

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Ol'ives.

18 And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit:

19 Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Je'sus Christ to God, even the Father.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.

17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Je'sus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God." (2 John 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 4: 2; Prov. 30: 6; Rev. 22: 18-20.

Daily Bible Readings

- November 3. M..... Instrumental Music Condemned (Amos 6: 1-5)
- November 4. T..... Jehovah Displeased (Amos 5: 21-24)
- November 5. W. A Walk of Faith (2 Cor. 5: 7; Rom. 10: 17)
- November 6. T..... Scriptural Praise (Mark 14: 26)
- November 7. F..... "In the Name of the Lord" (Col. 3: 16, 17)
- November 8. S..... Vain Worship Condemned (Matt. 15: 1-9)
- November 9. S..... Singing in Heaven (Rev. 14: 1-3)

TIME.—760 B.C.; A.D. 30-96.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Rome, and Bethel.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples; Paul and those to whom he wrote; Amos and the people of Israel.

Introduction

The term "praise," in and of itself, is broader than its use in the lesson now before us, as may be seen by the following passages of Scripture:

"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." (Prov. 27:

2.) When Jacob pronounced his blessings upon his sons, just before he died, he said to his fourth son, "Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise." (Gen. 49: 8.) The name *Judah*, indeed, means praise, and that is why his mother called him by that name. "And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, This time will I praise Jehovah: therefore she called his name Judah." The Old Testament description of a worthy woman closes with these words: "Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her words praise her in the gates." (Prov. 31: 31.) Jehovah himself is represented as praising men. (Cf. Rom. 2: 29; 1 Cor. 4: 5.)

But our lesson for today is concerned with the praise which God's people offer to him, and especially by means of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." The dictionary meaning of the word "praise" is an act of expressing approval, admiration, or commendation; the offering of grateful homage to another in words or song, as, for example, an act of worship. As the writer of Hebrews was nearing the close of his letter, he gave this exhortation, "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." (Heb. 13: 15.) And so, the writer reasons, Let us not return to Judaism, but approach God through

Christ, with a continual sacrifice of praise, both by word and song; and thereby make confession to his name. "Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his way aright will I show the salvation of God." (Psalm 50: 23.)

God's people today have few greater heritages than the privilege of singing praises unto him. It appears to be a fact, worthy of notice, that no great religious movement ever succeeds, in the absence of gospel singing. The place and power of song in the Christian's life and program of worship and service, may be learned from such scriptures as the following, namely, 1 Cor. 14: 15; Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16; and James 5:

13. (The second and third of the passages just listed are a part of the lesson text.) Longfellow wrote,

God sent his Singers upon the
earth
With songs of sadness and of
mirth,
That they might touch the hearts
of men,
And bring them back to heaven
again.

—*The Singers.*

Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of song; but it is not enough simply to sing. God's people must be careful to sing the right kind of songs. The New Testament not only tells of the place and power of song; it also tells the kind of songs which we must sing, as we shall see in this lesson.

The Golden Text

"Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God." The church of John's day, apparently toward the close of the first century of the Christian era, was beset by false teachers, who considered themselves to be "advanced men"; and it is sad to note that they did not all die with that period: there are many so-called liberal men, in the church and out of it, who consider themselves out in front of the "average" who make up the great body of believers. The entire verse from which the golden text is taken is translated by Moffatt in these words: "Anyone who is 'advanced' and will not remain by the doctrine

of Christ, does not possess God: he who remains by the doctrine of Christ possesses both the Father and the Son." These "advanced men" are the ones who are frequently referred to as progressive thinkers; and they are the ones against whom John issues the warning, in the letter from which the passage is quoted.

The Speaker's Bible points out that the apostle John obviously believed that it was possible at once for one to be advanced and to abide in the teaching which had been delivered to them. It is true that the emphasis is on *abiding*; but it is in a context in which men were advancing to the extent that they left

Christ behind. It would be a mistake to suppose that John was opposed to progress in Christian thought, and that he wanted to fetter inquiring minds. Such a view as that would put a premium on ignorance, and would discourage any progress in growth and development. John is not opposed to a person's using his God-given facilities for progress; but he wants all such progress to be within the framework of the revealed will of God. No man, however brilliant his mind may be, has the right to go beyond that which is written. (Cf. 1 Cor. 4: 6; cf. Deut. 29: 29; Gal. 1: 6-9; 2: Tim. 4: 1-5.) Or, as Vincent has it, "Whosoever advances beyond the limits of Christian doctrine, is unacceptable to God."

John lays down a broad principle, and it is applicable to anything which is related to the work and worship of the Lord's people. While John evidently had the Gnostics of his day in mind, the "whosoever" which he employs is broad enough to include any person in any age of

the world. We are not troubled with Gnostics today; but, as already noted, there are teachers on every side who have advanced, and are advancing, beyond the limits of the doctrine of Christ. This is true with reference to the kind of music which is used in worship; and it is true with reference to practically every item of work and worship in the entire field of Christian endeavor. Jesus laid down the principle in his sermon on the mount which, if respected, will always insure one that he is acceptable to the heavenly Father. The Lord's words are: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy by thy name, and by the name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7: 21-23.)

The Text Explained

Singing Amid the Shadows

(Matt. 26: 30)

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Jesus and his disciples had just finished the last passover supper, before the law of Moses was nailed to the cross, and the supper which bears the name of the Lord had just been brought into being, when the event of this section of the lesson text took place. John, in speaking of the departure of the traitor from the room in which these things took place, adds this significant comment: "He then having received the sop went out straightway: and it was night." (John 13: 30.) There was a greater darkness, than the mere physical, around Christ and his disciples; but there was a glorious light within. And notwithstanding the turmoil and the hostility on the outside, Jesus and his disciples had a hymn in their hearts and a song on their lips. They sang a hymn before going out into the darkness, on their way to the mount of Olives.

We have no way of knowing for

certain which hymn Jesus and his disciples sang, following the institution of the Lord's supper, but some Bible students think that it may have been one of the psalms which the Jewish people were accustomed to singing at the passover feast. But whatever the contents of the hymn may have been, we may be sure that it was appropriate for the occasion. And in commenting on the idea of singing, *The Speaker's Bible* asks, "Who can define the power over the soul of a melodious, highly trained human voice in perfect accord with the eternal laws of harmony? The Druids accounted for the strength and uniqueness of this power by affirming that all music was a faint and broken echo of the name of God, and the Holy Scripture testifies that music is the special art that God has ever consecrated to himself.

"The foundations of the world,' we are told, were laid to the strains of choral harmony when 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' Through the age of the patriarchs, and during the Mosaic economy, the chosen vehicle for the breaking

forth of the spirit of God in man was the art of music, and when the revelation of the Christ dawned upon the world's darkness, the Divinity Humanity himself took, as it were, this consecrated art by the hand, as he found her lingering in the old temple service, and wedded her to the praise of his church. At one of the most affecting moments in the history of the redemption, the institution of the Lord's supper, Christ and his disciples 'sang an hymn.' And from that day to this no human art has preached to the soul of man with half the power of music."

The Music of the New Testament Church

(Eph. 5: 18-20; Col. 3: 16, 17; Heb. 2: 11, 12)

And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The epistles, known as Ephesians and Colossians, were written by Paul, during his first Roman imprisonment, and were sent to their destinations by Tychicus (see Eph. 6: 21, 22; Col. 4: 7), who was also accompanied by Onesimus. They also took the letter to Philemon, apparently. Philemon was a personal letter—a letter by a man to a man about a man; but Ephesians and Colossians were both written to churches, and dealt primarily with the problems which were affecting the various congregations in that general area. These things are mentioned here, so that we can get the general setting, and come to realize that both of these letters were written on the same general subject. This accounts for the similarity in

the language of the two portions of this section of the lesson text.

There are times when a merry or cheerful heart is desirable (cf. Prov. 17: 22; Luke 15: 32; James 5: 13), but the Christian must be careful about the means he uses to bring about such a feeling. If the method which is employed to induce a merry or cheerful heart is wrong, then the result itself, of course, would also be wrong; but if the method is a wholesome and good one, then the result would likewise be wholesome and good. This appears to be the idea which Paul has in mind in verse 18, of the text now under consideration. Phillips renders the Ephesian passage in these words: "Don't get your stimulus from wine (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your souls. Express your joy in singing among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making music in your hearts for the ears of God! Thank God at all times for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And with an unparalleled program like that, the Lord's people are exhorted to speak "one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." The "psalms" were probably the songs of the Old Testament, or principally so at least; the "hymns" were probably mainly Christian compositions, that is, they were composed by the followers of Christ; while "spiritual songs" were, in the opinion of Trench, sacred poems which were neither psalms nor hymns. Hendriksen thinks that the *spiritual songs* were lyrics which dwell on themes other than direct praise to God and Christ. He also thinks that there may be some overlapping in the meaning of the three terms, as used here by Paul.

The term "*psallo*" (make melody) at one time carried with it the idea of playing a mechanical instrument, but the meaning was lost by the time it was transcribed into the New Testament Scriptures. And inasmuch as the original words of the Bible can never change their meaning, the word cannot have reference to any kind of mechanical musical instrument. But this is not to say that the idea of an *instrument* no

longer inheres in the Greek word *psallo*; it does and always will, as the passage now under consideration clearly shows. The *human heart* is the divinely authorized instrument; and it is with it that melody is to be made, as the Lord's people sing praises unto him.

The *Interpreter's Bible* notes that Spiritual fullness comes to expression in joyful fellowship, in perpetual thanksgiving. The whole life of the Christian, when it is given its true direction, moves in the atmosphere of worship. This is not to say that they can sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, only when they are in the public assembly; they can sing anytime: but we must conclude that when they do meet for worship, this is the type of praise which must characterize their assemblies. In his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan, Pliny found that Christians "were accustomed on a fixed day to gather before day-break and to sing antiphonally a hymn to Christ as to a god." Mechanical instrumental music in worship was unheard of for several hundred years after Christ.

John Spencer Curwen says, in his book, *Studies in Worship Music*, that "men still living can remember the time when organs were very seldom found outside the Church of England. The Methodists, Independents, and Baptists rarely had them, and by the Presbyterians they were stoutly opposed. But since these bodies began to introduce organs, the adoption of them has been unchecked. Even the Presbyterians are giving away, and if we read the future by the past we can hardly doubt that, in a few years, unaccompanied singing will very seldom be hard. Yet, even in the Church of England itself, organs did not obtain admission without much controversy." (Written since the Civil War!)

The "word of Christ" is the revealed will of God, and it is referred to as "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 2), and it is both reasonable and certain that his law will be where the Spirit is. The "Spirit" and the "word" are not the same; for it was the Spirit who both revealed and inspired the word. And so, if the Spirit dwells in the Lord's people, so will the word.

When the professed follower of Christ commits his way fully to the Lord, he cannot help but be thankful; because he realizes his standing in the sight of God. And not only so, he reads his Bible regularly, and from it he learns something of the spiritual foundation of the world, and something of its spiritual destiny. He is able to behold the movements of the Eternal, and he works his way through human relationships, including the individual, society, and nations everywhere. He does not ignore nor belittle disappointments and the trials and tribulations, which flesh is heir to; but he reserves judgment upon them, until the total effect of them can be seen in the providential workings of God. It is for these reasons that he always recognizes the authority of Christ in all of his relationships, and thanks God continually; for he verily believes that all things work together for good, to those who love God and are called according to his purpose. (See Rom. 8: 28.)

Blind Pride and Self-Indulgence Are Both Destructive

(Amos 6: 1-5)

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come! Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines: are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?—ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that sing idle song to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David.

Bible students are not agreed as to the particular group against whom Amos directed his stinging remarks; but it appears, on the surface at least, that he had both Judah (Zion) and Israel (Samaria) in mind. However, there can be no doubt about the situation which the prophet described. Here is a picture of the deadly sins of ingratitude at

work. Jehovah had delivered the people of Israel, all of them, out of the bondage of Egypt, and had greatly prospered them in the land of promise to which he had led them; but it was not long before they began to imitate the heathen nations about them, and almost completely forgot the God who had done so much for them. They had grown to the point of trusting in their own strength; and instead of inquiring of Jehovah, they apparently placed their confidence in the leaders of the nations about them.

If one will read the last two paragraphs of chapter five, and then continue on without a break with the first paragraph of chapter six, he will be going from the worship of the people to the banquets of the rich. It is easy to see from this reading that it is utterly impossible for unrighteous people to offer acceptable worship to God; for with Amos righteousness meant right relations with God, in whole-souled loyalty and devotion, and right relations with their fellow men, in social behavior. But the sinful people of the prophet's day had allowed their worship to cause them to have a feeling of national security; and therein lay its evil; or, to state the same thing in another way, their attitude toward Jehovah had not brought them close to him, nor to a dependence upon him.

And so, instead, of living closer to God, and feeling their need of him, the people of Amos' day did two things, namely, (1) they put far away the evil day, and (2) they caused the seat of violence to come

near. When people feel that there is no immediate prospect of their being punished or dying, those with a selfish disposition are not especially concerned about the manner in which they live, either with reference to God or their fellow men. Such people, as a rule, live well and imagine that they are clever and refined; they have a robust and exuberant patriotism, talk magnificently of their national welfare and destiny; but when it comes to the real woes and troubles of the people around them—poverty, overwork, and dissoluteness, which affect a nation's welfare more than anything else—, they have no pity and no care.

Amos was talking about the Lord's people during the time of the theocracy, but the same kind of a moral and spiritual situation can easily come about when the church and state are separated. The church in Laodicea, for example had a feeling of independence (see Rev. 3; 14-22); and when people are accustomed to having what they want, they generally do not hesitate to allow that attitude to enter into their church relationship. Such people do not see the need of searching the Scriptures, so that they can make sure that they are following the will of the Lord; but are open to the suggestions of, or are easily convinced by the arguments (?) of, those who have a way of appealing to their selfishness. If they want to make changes in their so-called worship, they do not hesitate to do so.

Questions for Discussion

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

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

What is meant by the term "praise," as used in this lesson? Discuss the term generally.

What means are at our disposal for praising God?

What place does singing have in the Christian's program of worship and service?

Why are songs so effective in influencing people for good?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstance did John write the words which serve as our golden text?

Why do some people want to be considered as "advance" leaders?

What is the Lord's attitude toward such people?

In what way can one be advanced and still abide in the teaching of Christ?

What are some of the God-given facilities for growth and development?

What is the force of the term "who-soever," as used by John?

What guiding principle did Jesus announce in this respect?

Singing Amid the Shadows

When and under what circumstances did Jesus and the disciples sing the hymn mentioned here?

What was probably the hymn which they sang?

Why is vocal music so powerful in the lives of people?

What has always been the place of singing in the economy of Jehovah?

The Music of the New Testament Church

In what way are the epistles known as Ephesians and Colossians related?

When and from what place were the letters sent to their respective destinations?

What do the Scriptures teach us with reference to a merry or cheerful heart?

What does the apostle say regarding the means of stimulating such a feeling?

Who or what is the Holy Spirit and how does he work in the scheme of human redemption?

What are the Lord's people exhorted to do by means of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs?

What are psalms? hymns? spiritual songs?

What does Paul mean when he says that we should make melody in our hearts in connection with our singing?

How can one make melody in his heart?

What, then, does the heart become in this respect?

What argument is made here against the

use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God's people?

When should Christians engage in the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs?

How did mechanical instrumental music come to be used in the worship of people?

What is the word of Christ which is to dwell in us?

What general attitude should the Lord's people seek to maintain at all times and why?

Blind Pride and Self-Indulgence Are Both Destructive

At whom, and for what purpose, did Amos direct the words now before us?

Why did the people of that day act as they did?

What relevance does their conduct have with reference to the church today?

Why do people, generally speaking, want to make changes in the Lord's work today?

Lesson VII—November 16, 1969

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Lesson Text

Acts 2: 42-45; Phil. 1: 3-7; 1 John 3: 16-18

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.

3 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you,

4 Always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy,

5 For your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now;

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good

work in you will perfect it until the day of Je'-sus Christ:

7 Even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace.

16 Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 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?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"We have fellowship one with another." (1 John 1: 7.)
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 122: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

- November 10. M.....Ground of Fellowship (1 John 1: 3-7)
- November 11. T.....Bond of Fellowship (Gal. 5: 1-6)
- November 12. W.....Fellowship through Prayer (Matt. 6: 5-15)
- November 13. T.....Fellowship through Service (1 John 3: 13-24)
- November 14. F.....Fellowship in Suffering (Phil. 3: 8-11)
- November 15. S.....Fellowship with Evil (Eph. 5: 7-11)
- November 16. S.....Fellowship of Material Things (Rom. 15: 26, 27)

TIME.—A.D. 30-90.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Rome, and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Peter, Paul, John, and the people to whom they spoke and wrote.

Introduction

The term "fellowship" so far as the expression itself is concerned, is fairly familiar: but it is all but certain that the meaning and significance of the word is not nearly so well known. The question of fellowship is widely discussed throughout the New Testament, especially after the church came into existence; and if one will read that which has been said by inspired men regarding the subject, it will not be difficult for him to see that fellowship is part and parcel of Christianity. Human nature was created with a need for fellowship, and it is utterly impossible for one to become that which God intends for him to be, without the help which comes to him through fellowship. Mankind, indeed, seeks for fellowship in practically all areas of his being, but it is with fellowship on the level of Christianity that we are concerned with in this lesson.

One has only to go back to the very beginning of time, in order to see the origin of the relationship which we know as fellowship; for it was then that the idea of fellowship was first introduced into the world, so far as humanity is concerned. *The Great Texts of the Bible* notes that three fundamental facts are involved in the relationship we are now considering, namely, (1) *man was created for fellowship with God*; (2) *sin can and does break that fellowship*; and (3) *God seeks to restore it*. All three of these facts are plainly set forth in the third chapter of Genesis, and the remainder of the Bible is but an extension or an amplification of them. God is never more pleased, than when he can call one of his faithful servants his friend; and he never experiences greater sorrow, than

when one of his creatures is for ever banished from his sight. The truth of the statements just made may be clearly seen when we look at the cross upon which his only begotten Son died. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5: 21; cf. John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8.)

In seeking to answer the question, What is fellowship? the editor of *The Great Texts of the Bible* says, "Real religion stands or falls with the belief in a personal God, and in realizing the need of communion with him. When once we destroy, or tamper with, the conviction that we are living, or should be living, in spiritual contact with a Divine Being who has revealed himself to us in his Son, worship ceases to have any real meaning. We may not be able to certify or interpret to others this contact with God. But the deepest of truths is that God is not far from any one of us, and it is the Divine Spirit within us that seeks and strives [cf. Rom. 8: 26, 27] for communication with our heavenly Father.

Speak to him thou for he hears,
and spirit with spirit can meet—

Closer is he than breathing, and
nearer than hands and feet.

"God made us to speak to him, not only in formal prayers on stated occasions, but in the silent language of meditation, and in the effort implied in maintaining our belief in his presence and nearness to us. It is a sure sign of something being wrong with us if we shrink from this great thought, and take refuge in any view of life that tends to hide from us the solemn mystery of standing before the living God."

The Golden Text

"We have fellowship one with another." The term "fellowship" is found several times in the chapter from which the text just quoted is taken, as may be seen from the following citations: "That which we have seen and heard declare we

unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we

walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The "fellowship one with another" is the fellowship which Christians enjoy with each other. John makes it plain that the fellowship which he, along with others, enjoyed, was the fellowship with the Father and the Son; and it was his desire that the brethren to whom he wrote would have part in the same fellowship. But he cautions, "If we say that we have fellowship with him [that is, with God] and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." God is always in the light (cf. 1 Tim. 6: 16), and it is only by dwelling in the light, not, of course, to the extent that God does, that we can have fellowship with the Father; and it follows, as a natural consequence, that all of his people who do dwell, that is, live, in the light, will have fellowship with each other: for no one can dwell in the light with God and not be in fellowship with his brethren. (Cf. 1 John 3: 13-15; 4: 20, 21.)

The lives of Christian people must be lived in the church; for that is the sphere ordained of God for their growth and development (cf. Eph. 3: 21); and it is the fellowship which they enjoy with God, and with each other, in that relation, which satisfies every need they have, spiritually speaking. (Cf. Eph. 1; 3.) *The Interpreter's Bible* points out that individual religion is a contradiction in terms; because our spiritual life is of necessity mutual. The Divine-human relationship of believers constitutes the true fellowship of the church (1 John 1: 3; 1 Cor. 1: 9; 2 Cor. 13: 14), and exposes by contrast cheap forms of so-called fellowship, in which churches frequently specialize. It is too often true that many churches are little more than religious clubs, whose fellowship consists of entertainments, friendly smiles, and diffused geniality. The true nature of the church's fellowship is portrayed by Jesus' metaphor of the vine and the branches (John 15: 1-6), in Paul's figure of the body (Rom. 12: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 12: 12-27); and the true mark of the church's fellowship is self-sacrificing love, which is manifested in mutual service, prayer, labor, and helpfulness.

The Text Explained

The Daily Life of the Early Church (Acts 2: 42-45)

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 early church, as exemplified by the first Christians. God himself set the apostles in the church (1 Cor. 12: 28), and they constituted the visible center of unity in the newly established church. It was around these plenipotentiary ministers that the early disciples gathered, and it was from them that 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; and it is encouraging to know that the Lord's people were united in what they were and in what they did. The four basic elements of that unity are clearly

stated, and they are just as applicable now as they were then.

(1) *The apostles' teaching.* 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 what was true then is true now. The church therefore, from its very beginning, 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 essential 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.* Vincent points out that this fellowship consisted of "a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and a mutual, active participation in that interest and in each other." There were three aspects in which

this principle of fellowship was applied to the early church, namely, a. It is evident that they continued to encourage each other in all spiritual matters. (Cf. Heb. 10: 24, 25.) b. They continued to demonstrate their mutual regard for each other's welfare. (See Rom. 12: 15; 1 Cor. 12: 25-27.) c. 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 one does get the idea, from such passages as Luke 22: 29, 30 and Acts 20: 7, that the Lord's day worship is centered around the Lord's table.

(4) *The prayers.* These were doubtless the public prayers of the assembled Christians, although it is possible that they also included their private devotions. Prayer is, in its widest sense, "man's supreme effort to find the right answer to the meaning of life." With this view of the question before us, 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.

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.

These verses are taken from a context which clearly shows that Christianity is a way of life. All of the Lord's people were living in close association with each other. There was no intellectual snobbery, no social superiority, no racial intolerance, no temperamental privileges. Instead, they were all bound into a fellowship by the same ideals (the apostles' teaching), by the same practices (the breaking of bread), by the same religious habits (the

prayers), and by the same economic rights and responsibilities (they sold their possessions and good, and saw to it that the needs of all were met). People who live according to these principles cannot be otherwise than interested in each other.

If verse 42 emphasizes the worship of the early Christians, then the verses just quoted tell us something of the day by day fellowship of those who were devoted to the Lord. Hall L. Calhoun notes that the broadest bond of fellowship, known to mankind, is that which comes through worship and daily Christian activities. Such fellowship does not take into consideration, as has already been pointed out, race, color, age, sex, condition of climate, or custom. (Cf. Col. 3: 11.) Fellowship through worship and service is the one universal bond of brotherhood, as it was ordained in keeping with the great purpose of the Creator of the human race. And not only is it the broadest bond of fellowship; it is also the most beneficent provision which Jehovah has made for his creatures.

Fellowship and the Progress of the Gospel

(Phil. 1: 3-7)

I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ; even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch, as both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace.

If one will look around him today, he will soon learn that the watchwords for promoting practically any cause are "organization" and "enthusiasm"; but with Paul, they are joy and fellowship. It was in this difference that the secret of the apostle's own amazing devotion to the gospel, and his faith in the poor, ignorant, and imperfect fellow-workers of his, as the adequate means for getting the message into

the hearts of others, is to be found. There were great organized religions all around the places where Paul and his fellow Christians labored—religions which were sanctioned by immemorial customs, housed in vast temples, and embodied in impressive rites, with the power and authority of strong and ruthless governments behind them, and which looked upon the Christian communities as foolish, weak, and despised; yet the apostle Paul confidently believed that he and his fellow-workers were equipped with all that was needed to further the cause of their Lord in the very shadow of those great institutions.

But such confidence as that which characterized Paul and those with him was possible, only because they trusted in a different source of power. Christianity was entirely foreign to anything the world had ever seen; and it was established by, and identified with, the greatest being who ever walked upon the earth. Furthermore, the Author of this new religious movement was the possessor of, and was making available to his followers, unlimited power—power which could act upon the souls of men, in a manner similar to dynamite upon the material things of time and place. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19, 20; 1 Pet. 3: 22; Rom. 1: 16, 17.) When viewed from the standpoint of the world, Christianity was less likely to stir up enthusiasm on the part of the public, than the established religions of that day; but what the leaders of those institutions failed to see and understand, was that the followers of Christ had within them the breath of life, without which the mightiest movements of any age will decay.

Even a superficial reading of the Epistle to the Philippians will enable anyone to see that it is largely a letter of joy and thankfulness. It is, in fact, often referred to as Paul's love letter to his beloved brethren in the first church which he established on European soil. And it is a fact, worthy of notice, that there is not a single rebuke in the entire epistle. The nearest thing that comes to such a statement is found in the apostle's exhortation to two of the women there to be of the same mind. (See Phil. 4: 2, 3.) It is not surprising therefore that Paul

had occasion for joy and thanksgiving, every time he thought of the brethren in Philippi. And it was for the same reason that he never ceased to pray for them, always making his supplication with joy.

The word "fellowship" means joint participation, and that apparently was the sense in which Paul used the term, when he wrote to his beloved Philippians. The apostle always felt that he was obligated to preach the gospel (cf. Rom. 1: 14, 15; 1 Cor. 9: 16), and he was forever discharging his obligation by communicating it to others by word of mouth, and by whatever means he could reach those who needed this great message of truth. And it appears that the Philippians themselves also felt that they too were obligated to see to it that the gospel was preached to others; and they too employed every means at their command, in order to discharge their responsibility. It appears that the particular part which the Philippians performed in such work, at least insofar as their relationship to Paul was concerned, was to pray, contribute money, and manifest an attitude toward the apostle, which always resulted in rejoicing on his part. Both Paul and the Philippian brethren were working toward the same end, and their joint efforts were a demonstration of the kind of fellowship which is pleasing to the Lord.

The same original word for "fellowship" is found in both Acts 2: 42 and Phil. 1: 5; and, as already pointed out, the basic meaning of the term is an active joint participation in those things which are of mutual interest. The word answers to the Latin *communio*, from *communis*, that is, *common*; and it is for this reason that the Greek word is sometimes rendered "communion," as in 1 Corinthians 10: 16; 2 Corinthians 13: 14. However, "fellowship" is the most common rendering. Thus, in the passage now before us, Paul writes of "your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel," which signifies *co-operation* in the widest sense; or, which is the same thing, *participation* in sympathy, suffering, and labor. Occasionally the term is used to express the particular form which the spirit of fellowship assumes; as, for examples, in Romans

15: 26; Hebrews 13: 16, where it signifies the giving of alms, but always with an emphasis upon the principle of Christian fellowship which underlies the gift. (See Vincent, comments on Acts 2: 42.)

The reason why the Philippian brethren could manifest such an attitude toward Paul, and the spreading of the gospel, was due to a deeper fellowship which they enjoyed. Robert Johnstone, in his book, *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, says that "the 'fellowship'—of these brethren was, first and fundamentally, *with Christ*. They had been brought, in the measure of their faith, into unity of view and unity of will with him; and therefore with him, guided by his wisdom and sustained by his strength, were exerting themselves in his cause. They had learned to regard sin in the light in which he regards it. Wherever and in whatever form it showed itself, in themselves or in others, they saw it to be exceedingly evil, utterly and only evil. By this oneness of view with their Lord they were naturally impelled to oneness, or 'fellowship,' of action. They felt it to be most reasonable that if he, to overthrow sin, gave himself up to death, and now is ever pleading through his Spirit with gospel hearers, knocking at the door of their hearts, all who think with him should join him in his work of love." And inasmuch as Paul was a servant of Christ, engaged in the work which the Lord gave him to do (cf. Acts 9: 15; 26: 12-19), the very least that the Philippians felt that they could do, was to join hands with the apostle in that great undertaking. This, indeed, should be an impressive lesson to us today.

The Lord's Example and the Believer's Duty

(1 John 3: 16-18)

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.

Today's English Version of the New Testament renders the passage just quoted in these words: "This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers! If a man is rich and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he has love for God in his heart? My children! Our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action."

This is John's way of telling us what true love is; and it is well to note that such love is neither passive nor idle. Just a few hours before his crucifixion, Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15: 13.) The Lord, in the passage just quoted, 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 Romans 5: 6-8, we shall see that his love was infinitely greater than any love which human beings are able to demonstrate. One has only to read such love stories as that of Jonathan and David, Damon and Pythias, and similar narratives, in order to see the effect which such devotion has on the world; but when we take into consideration the matchless love which Christ enjoins upon his followers, we are overwhelmed by its intensity. To lay down one's life is to give it up in death; or at least to be willing to do so.

But there are not many instances in which people of this day and time are called upon to give their lives for their brethren; but there are other ways in which we can demonstrate our love for our fellow Christians, namely, by the application of the principle of self-sacrifice. Westcott expresses the matter in this way: "There is a danger in indulging ourselves in lofty views which lie out of the way of common experience. We may therefore try ourselves by a far more homely test. The question is commonly not of dying for another but of communicating to another the outward means of living." (Cf. Gal. 1: 1, 2,

6; James 1: 27.) We can live, not for our own pleasure, 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 tense darkness of great temptations.

By assuming this kind of attitude, and putting it into practice, we pass into the life of the world each day, not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto the needs of others; and those who do these things have heard the voice of the greater love.

Questions for Discussion

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

Why was the apostle Paul so successful in his work of carrying the gospel to others?

What great blessing does the Lord make available to his people in this great work?

What is the general nature of the letter which Paul wrote to the Philippians?

Why did Paul feel his obligation to preach the gospel?

Why did the Philippian brethren feel that they should cooperate with him in his work?

In what form did the fellowship of the Philippians with Paul manifest itself?

In what other way is the original word for "fellowship" rendered?

What was the fundamental reason for the fellowship in the case of Paul and the Philippians?

What lesson should we learn from this?

Introduction

What is the meaning and significance of "fellowship"?
In what way did such a relationship come into being?

The Golden Text

With whom do Christians have fellowship and upon what basis?

Why can't a person have fellowship with God while not maintaining that relationship with his brethren?

Why can't the individual Christian live his life for the Lord alone?

The Daily Life of the Early Church

In what way did the early Christians begin their training for the Lord's service?

What is meant by the apostles' teaching?

In what way did they maintain their fellowship?

What were the breaking of bread and the prayers?

Why is Christianity often referred to as a way of life?

Why is Christian fellowship always a blessing to those who participate in it?

Fellowship and the Progress of the Gospel

What is the principal difference between the way in which the world promotes its causes, and the Christian plan for the same thing?

The Lord's Example and the Believer's Duty

What great lesson did Jesus teach by his example?

What duty does that example impose upon the followers of Christ?

What practical duty grows out of it?

What is the very best way to learn the true meaning of love?

In what way did Jesus measure the greatness of love?

What is the greatest possible manifestation of love?

What does a lesson of this kind do for the spirit of selfishness?

What is the basic reason why people live a life of selflessness?

Lesson VIII—November 23, 1969

DOING GOOD UNTO ALL MEN

Lesson Text

Luke 10: 30-37; Gal. 6: 1-10

30 Je'-sus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Je-ru'-sa-lem to Jer-i'-cho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And in like manner a Le'-vite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Sa-mar'-i-tan, as

he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion,

34 And came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine: and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Je'-sus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3 For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor.

5 For each man shall bear his own burden.

6 But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* (Gal. 6: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 15: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

November 17. M.	Love God and Man (Mark 12: 28-34)
November 18. T.	Who Is Our Neighbor? (Luke 10: 25-37)
November 19. W.	Obligation to All (Gal. 6: 1-10)
November 20. T.	Duty of the Church to All (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)
November 21. F.	True Religion (James 1: 27; 1 Tim. 5: 16)
November 22. S.	Service to Christ through Others (Matt. 25: 31-46)
November 23. S.	Validating Faith (James 2: 14-17)

TIME.—A.D. 28-57.

PLACES.—Judaea and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus and a certain lawyer; Paul and the Galatian brethren.

Introduction

One of the cardinal principles of Christianity underlies our study for today; and it is clearly seen in the attitude which the Lord requires that each individual child of God should manifest toward others, both in the church and out of it. No one can truthfully say that he has no needs of any kind; but when one considers mankind as a whole, he will have no difficulty in seeing that all people need each other in some ways. The Bible nowhere encourages God's people to do that for people which they can do for themselves; but he does require that they manifest a feeling of compassion toward the unfortunate, and a willingness to share their burdens with them.

The needs of people manifest themselves in many forms, and faithful Christians will do that

which they can to assist and relieve them; and they will do so joyfully, for such is the will of the Lord. W. H. Carnegie, in writing of the growth of the early church, says, "The astonishing spread of Christianity through the length and breadth of 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 doubtless were contributory factors, but the main factor was the type of life displayed by the Christians themselves. The best men of the time were profoundly dissatisfied with the coarseness and selfishness and ineffective intellectualism with which their social surroundings were charged. They were longing for an atmosphere of thought and feeling, and

for modes of life and conduct, to which their nobler nature could respond. And gradually they 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 live, tending to their sick, caring for their poor, teaching their ignorant, consigning their dead with reverent hopefulness to the grave, always ready to place their beneficent activities at the disposal of those outside their own fold who were in need of them. And so they 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."

Jesus pointed out to the people of his day that one of the great commandments of the law of Moses, is that one should love his neighbor as himself (see Matt. 22: 34-40); and what was true then is also true now (Rom. 13: 8-10). However, it should be noted that this is not the kind of love which seeks its own pleasure and comfort. (Cf. Matt. 16: 24, 25.) The love which a child of God must have for his neighbor, is the same as that which he has for himself, namely, a love which recognizes the dignity and worth of the human soul. Love for one's self and his neighbor is man's supreme duty; and since there is no respect of persons with God, it is the eternal obligation of each individual to have the same kind of interest in his fellow man, that he does in himself. The Father is not willing that any one should be lost (cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9), and if we are to be like him we must work for the sal-

vation of others, as well as for ourselves.

When the story of human weal and woe comes to be fully told, the part which was played by love, both human and divine, in helping others carry their loads, will be one of immortal glory. We have all seen the strong take advantage of the weak, in order to have their own way, and to gain their own desired end; but we have also seen others, with great strength, use it to help those who, alone, were not able to bear the burdens which had been cast upon their shoulders.

If any one doubts the necessity of being a burden-bearer for Christ's sake, as well as one who bears his cross for the same reason, let him read the Lord's own picture of the final judgment (Matt. 25: 31-46). It was in that portrayal of the destinies of men that we read, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." The "righteous" were those who had done the things mentioned in verses 34-40.

The Golden Text

This portion of our lesson for today is in the regular text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

The Text Explained

Neglected Opportunities versus the Solution of a Common Problem

(Luke 10: 30-37)

Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by

chance a certain priest was going down that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved

with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beat, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

This section of the lesson text is taken from one of the Lord's parables, known to us as *The Parable of the Good Samaritan*. The setting begins with verse twenty-five of the chapter which contains the parable, and that portion of the narrative should be read at this time. In order to appreciate the significance of this lesson, it is necessary to understand something of the background against which the parable was spoken. The Jews had, for fifteen hundred years, considered themselves as being exclusively God's people, and had regarded all others as being godless, unclean, hopeless, and lost. (Cf. Luke 18: 9f.) This kind of an attitude had led them, and especially their leaders, to become technical, narrowminded, and selfish. They could, and did, criticize others freely, while failing to see their own faults (cf. Rom. 2: 1ff). They had no interest in the salvation of other people, and were vigorously opposed to any efforts made by their people in that direction. (This spirit is clearly portrayed in the Book of Jonah.)

Jesus had not gone very far in his public ministry before he met this kind of opposition on the part of the scribes and Pharisees; and his purpose in speaking the parable now before us, was to show them the error of their way, and to assure them of God's love for all men. The Jews literally hated the nations about them (cf. Matt. 5: 43); and they had no dealings with Samaritans (John 4: 9); and it was with the limited and circumscribed view of other people that the lawyer asked the question about his neighbor. Jesus had already explained to

the lawyer, in response to the latter's question, that love for God and one's neighbor were essential to eternal life; but that was not the answer which the legal expert wanted. He evidently already had the conventional idea of one's neighbor, which apparently was the same then as it is now; and he wanted a reply from Jesus which would confirm the view that only those about him were his neighbors, and that his attitude toward all other men was justified. This was the background against which the parable was spoken.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was about eighteen miles long; and after passing through Bethany, only a short distance from Jerusalem, the remainder of the road passed through mountainous ravines, without habitation, except for an inn, the ruins of which are still there. Jerome says that the road was called a bloody way, and it was, of course, dangerous for one to be on it alone. But the parable, although with the road as its setting, portrays to us a way of life; and when we consider the teaching of the parable, it will not be difficult for us to recognize three distinct philosophies of life, represented by the robbers, the priest and Levite, and the good Samaritan. The robbers portrayed the view that what a man has the power to do, he has the right to do; or might makes right. Such people love material wealth more than they love people, and they do not hesitate to kill a man for his money.

The priest and the Levite represent the passive class in society, or those who do not assume any responsibility for the misfortunes of others. It is worthy of notice here, that a man's character cannot be adequately judged, until he has the opportunity to do something about a situation. (Cf. Matt. 25: 14-30.) No one could foretell what the men would do with the talents, until they had the opportunity to use them. People of the passive class do not actually harm people, or, as the robbers did, place them in an unfortunate situation; but neither will they do anything to get them back into wholesome surroundings. Those who manifest this type of philosophy will not kill a man for his

money; but neither will they spend theirs in order to better his condition. (Cf. 1 John 3: 13-18.)

People who are like the good Samaritan are the nearest like God; and in them love and sympathy find their highest expression. When they see people in trouble or in need, they ask no questions, that is, they do not try to find out what caused their trouble or need; but, being "moved with compassion," they immediately begin making whatever efforts they can to better their condition, and endeavor to help them solve their problem. (It is well to keep in mind just here that there is a vast difference between simply giving a man something, and in seeking to help him solve the problem which has involved him in the situation in which he is found.)

Men, to people like the good Samaritan, although strangers, mean more than money; and they are willing to invest, not only their means, but also their time and influence, in an effort to save the unfortunate. Those who represent the philosophy of the man who proved to be a friend to the injured person who was travelling the Jericho road, do not see in the New Testament a list of direct precepts, each of which is applicable to an individual case; instead, they look upon this revelation from Christ as a book of living principles of universal application. And so, with a heart full of love for God and man, these people experience no difficulty in finding occasions for making practicable applications of these God-inspired principles. Their philosophy is, What I am and have belong to God; and I am willing to spend and be spent according to his pleasure, and the needs of men.

And so, instead of telling the lawyer that everybody was his neighbor, Jesus presented a picture of the principle of neighborliness at work in the Samaritan traveller; and made it so beautiful that the man who was conversing with Jesus could not keep from commending it, even when he saw that the principle of doing good to others, was being worked out in the life of a despised Samaritan. It is also a fact, worthy of notice, that Jesus, in teaching the lesson regarding the identity of

one's neighbor, did not abuse the Jews, nor praise the Samaritans. He simply related an incident which could, and probably did, happen frequently. The Lord made no comments, but simply presented a situation in which human beings played a part, told what each person did, and then asked the lawyer to draw his own conclusion. The lawyer did not fail to get the lesson, even if he did not speak the word "Samaritan." Most people can comment on human relationships, but it remained for Jesus to give the true meaning of both "love" and one's "neighbor."

The parable which Jesus spoke in response to the lawyer's question gives us an unfading picture of that true spirit of loving-kindness which, by God's grace and in keeping with his providence, has demonstrated itself in all ages of the world, and without which all the best that human beings can do, would fall far short of the necessary goal. The spirit of the good Samaritan is the spirit which we need in our more complicated social structure, to help us face our problems with goodwill; and, as some one has observed, all the ages, both ancient and modern, can use any one, regardless of his origin, race, or color, who breaks through the conventions of self-interest, and shows us a heart like the heart of God. It is important for us to remember that the entire issue, on the occasion now before us, arose out of a question regarding eternal life. And it appears that to the mind of Jesus selfishness is death, but love is life; and that there is no true life, except in love.

The Healing Ministry of the Church

(Gal. 6: 1-5)

*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. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden.*

The predominant idea throughout this lesson is that helping or doing

good to others; and it is easy to see that all three sections of the lesson text present the Lord's way of doing that very thing. There will always be those in the church who are overcome by the tempter; but if those who remain faithful to the Lord will do their part, as Paul in this portion of the lesson text suggests, many of those who lapse into sin can be recovered. The person who is *overtaken* in a trespass is one who discovers that he has done wrong, *after* the deed was done. It was not his intention to go astray; but, having gone aside from the path of righteousness, he comes to realize it. His trespass was not the result of a sudden temptation to do wrong, but something of which he was unaware at the moment. (Cf. 1 Pet. 5: 8.)

Now, what should be done in a case like this? Paul's answer is both clear and to the point: "ye who are spiritual," that is, those of you who are living as the Spirit directs (cf. Gal. 5: 25, 26), "restore," rescue him from the evil one, but you must act "in a spirit of gentleness," or deal gently with the offender. (Cf. the attitude of the father who restored the prodigal son to his former place. (Luke 15: 22-24.) "Looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Not only does such a course conform to the spirit of the Golden Rule; it also puts the "spiritual man" on guard with reference to the tempter. It is relatively easy for people who are not involved in the sin of someone else, to find themselves in sin, simply because they yielded to the tempter and manifested the wrong attitude toward the person who had already sinned, and failed to deal with him gently in trying to restore him. The transition from the plural (brethren) to the singular (thyself) is very suggestive. It is the duty of *all* spiritual brethren to restore the offender; but *each* individual needs to consider himself.

The original word for "burden" in verse 2 is *baros*; and it literally means weight, load, trouble. The bearing of burdens of this kind does not involve the transference of the burden to someone else, but signifies lending a hand to help in lifting a heavy load. The context indicates that the type of burden referred to

is one involving moral infirmities and faults, and the sorrow and shame which they awaken in the offender. It is important that we remember this; for it often happens that the sorrow and shame which sin has brought to one, is almost more than he can bear. A situation like this gives those who are themselves spiritual a wonderful opportunity to do good. We are specifically charged with the duty of helping others bear their burdens; and especially those which are too great for them to bear alone.

But all acceptable obedience must be properly motivated; and the motive which should prompt the Christian in the case now before us, is plainly stated by Paul, namely, "and so fulfil the law of Christ," which is pre-eminently the law of love. (Cf. John 13: 34, 35; Matt. 7: 12; Rom. 15: 1-3.) The obligation which rests upon those who are spiritual is an essential part of the moral content of Christianity; it is a necessary part of the Christian interpretation of human life. It is such a situation as this that Christianity makes some of its most unique and significant pronouncements. (Cf. Matt. 25: 31-46.) The old Greek and Roman philosophers said some very fine and noble things about man's own suffering; but they had comparatively little feeling for the sufferings of others. Such pre-Christian philosophy never knew the deep meaning of sympathy; and it remained for the teaching of Jesus, which is perpetuated in the New Testament, to enable men to understand the wider obligations of their common humanity. Man must, of necessity, have a part in bearing his own burdens, but the Lord has ordained that he should have help from his brethren, if his burden is great for his own strength.

The Inexorable Law of the Harvest and Some Hortatory Conclusions

(Gal. 6: 6-10)

But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 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 let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 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.

It has frequently been pointed out that Galatians and Romans were written on the same general subject, with Galatians being the shorter letter, for immediate delivery; and Romans, the longer and more detailed discussion of the great issues which were essential to a full understanding of the truth of Christianity, in its relation to the law of Moses. And the portion of the text now before us appears to be another instance in which Paul briefly mentions a subject, and then gives a fuller discussion elsewhere. Those who are acquainted with Paul's writings will know that he clearly taught that those who profited by the labors of others, owed their financial and moral support to those who did the work. (Cf. 1 Cor. 9: 1-18; Rom. 15: 26, 27.) This last passage will be more apparent when one remembers that in both Galatians and Romans Paul dealt with the relationship between Jews and Gentiles who had accepted the gospel, and especially with reference to the activities of the Judaizers.

The last two verses of this section of the lesson text, as indeed the others verses of the section, are directly

related to the injunction found in the closing part of chapter 5. Paul had warned the Galatian Christians that they could not please God, while walking after the flesh; and he then showed them what the fruit of the Spirit is, or what kind of a life will issue from a determination to live as the Spirit directs. Galatians 6: 1-10 sets forth some of the rules of conduct which the Spirit sets forth; and so, as a kind of summary, Paul exhorts, "And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not," that is, we shall reap that which we have sown to the Spirit, when the time of harvest comes. This is another way of saying that we must not relax our efforts, and become exhausted, as a result of our efforts to resist the devil. (Cf. Matt. 15: 32; Mark 8: 3; Heb. 12: 3, 5, for other instances of the use of the term *faint*.)

The Lord's people are obligated to help all men who have need; but if we have to make a difference, we should make it in favor of Christian people. "The household of the faith" is equivalent to "the household of God" (Eph. 2: 19), or the church. The exhortation of verse 6 was addressed to "churches," as such, and not to individual Christians; and it is easy to see that both congregations and individuals have a common responsibility with respect to benevolent work.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What great principle underlies the lesson for today?
Why is such a study so important?
What was the principal reason for the rapid growth of the early church?
What is the underlying motive which actuates the kind of service enjoined in this lesson?
In what way does love affect one's view of others, both individually and collectively?
What attitude do the strong sometimes take toward weaker people and why?
Why is burden-bearing an essential part of the religion of Christ?
What is the principal difference between burden-bearing and cross-bearing?
In what way is the Lord's picture of the final judgment related to this lesson?
What was the difference which he pictured between those on his right and on his left?

Neglected Opportunities versus the Solution of a Common Problem

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the parable from which this section of the lesson text is taken?
Why did the Jews feel as they did toward all other races and peoples?
Why did the scribes and Pharisees oppose Jesus so vigorously?
What should the road "from Jerusalem to Jericho" mean to us?
What three philosophies of life were set forth by the people about whom Jesus spoke?
Discuss each of these views of life and show how they operate today.
How did Jesus answer the lawyer's question regarding his neighbor?
Who, then, is any one's neighbor today?

The Healing Ministry of the Church

What duty does this section of the lesson text emphasize?
In what way are people often "overtaken" in a trespass?
What responsibility do the spiritual people

of the church have toward such a person?

Who are the "spiritual" members of the church and why are they held responsible for others?

What caution does Paul sound for those who should restore the offender and why?

What is meant by "restoring such a one"?

What is said about burden-bearing in this section of the lesson text?

Why must every man bear his own burden?

Why is all acceptable obedience necessarily properly motivated?

The Inexorable Law of the Harvest and Some Hortatory Conclusions

What relation exists between Galatians and Romans, and what is their purpose?

How did Paul deal with the question of supporting teachers of the word?

What kind of teachers did the apostle have in mind?

What effect were the Judaizers of that day having on the Gentile converts?

Why did the apostle list the rules of conduct in Gal. 6: 1-10?

What assurance did he give the Galatian brethren?

What special duty did he remind them of in verse 10?

Who is responsible for responding to the needs of others?

Lesson IX—November 30, 1969

THE WAY TO PEACE IN THE WORLD

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-ho'-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-ho'-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-op'-a-gus, and said,
Ye men of Ath'-6ns, 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." (Eph. 2: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 98: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

November 24. M.....	Peace in the Kingdom (Isa. 2: 1-11)
November 25. T.....	God Over All (Acts 17: 22-31)
November 26. W.....	Jesus Taught Love to All (Matt. 5: 43-48)
November 27. T.....	How to Overcome Evil (Rom. 12: 17-21)
November 28. F.....	Jesus Promised Peace (John 14: 23-27)
November 29. S.....	All Are Blessed in Christ (Gal. 3: 26-29)
November 30. S.....	How Love an Enemy? (Luke 6: 27, 28)

TIME.—760 B.C.-A.D. 52.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Athens, and Sychar.

PERSONS.—Isaiah and the Jews; Paul and the men of Athens; Jesus and the woman of Samaria.

Introduction

Multitudes of people who are studying these lessons have known something of the horrors of two world wars, the Korean war, and now the longest conflict in which the United States has ever been engaged, the war in South Vietnam. The terrible conditions, to say nothing of our respect for God and his word, should cause everyone of us to do what we can to focus the attention of responsible people on the subject of world peace. A just and lasting peace should engage the efforts of people throughout the world, and Christians in particular. But anyone who is acquainted with the teaching of the Bible, is aware of the fact that God must be taken in consideration, before a condition like that can, prevail. Or, if the people of the world would live as God directs, wars everywhere would cease immediately.

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, World War I (1914-1918) resulted in a direct cost of 186 billion dollars; an indirect cost, from destruction, etc. of 84 billion dollars; a cost in the capitalized value of human life, 67 billion dollars; or a total money cost of 337 billion dollars. The total military cost of World War II (1939-1945) to all belligerents has been placed at 1 trillion, 116 billion, 991 million, 463 thousand, and 84 dollars, and property damage at 230 billion, and 900 million dollars. These figures do not, of course, include the cost and damage of the multi-year war in

China, the Korean war, the war in South Vietnam, and many other lesser wars which are almost continuously being waged in various parts of the world. But the huge sums of money which have been listed above fade into insignificance, when we consider the moral loss and the spiritual bankruptcy of the nations which were 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 thing whatsoever. The wars mentioned above clearly demonstrate the indiscriminate ruin into which war plunges the victor, the vanquished, and the 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 to see the need for working for peace in this troubled world; but enable us to know that we can succeed, only as we strive to turn men to God. As long as Satan has his way in the world, just that long will wars and rumors of wars be the experience of mankind. (Cf. Matt. 24: 4-8; Rev. 11: 15.)

The Golden Text

"For he is our peace." The peace referred to here, of course, is the peace which Christ made between Jews and Gentiles; but we should always keep in mind the fact that it is the peace which Christ has made possible, that will insure the tranquility which so many people long for. "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" by the Messianic prophet: "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 to 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.)

It is often a good thing for Bible students to read various versions of the Scriptures; for not all translators have given the true meaning of a given passage, that is, the true meaning of the original. The King James Version, for example, renders the closing part of the passage just quoted in these words: "And on earth peace, good will toward men." There is, of course, a vast difference in saying that, and in saying, "And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Peace was not promised to the people of the earth, as such; but to the "men in whom he is well pleased." Any one who is familiar with the Bible knows that God has never promised peace to the people who disregard his will. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. 57: 21.) The peace which Christ makes possible is only for 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 that which the New Testament says about it. (Cf. Phil. 4: 6, 7; cf. Isa. 26: 3.)

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. 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. 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 na-

tion, neither shall they learn war any more.

This justly famous passage parallels the equally famous prediction by Micah, with this addition: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever." (Mic. 4: 1-5.) The statement by Isaiah has been called one of the great prophetic visions of all ages; and what was true of the words of Isaiah, is also true of those of Micah: for the prediction gives voice to one of the immemorial longings of the human heart for peace. Isaiah does tell the human race that peace is

possible; but he also tells all people that they will have to go to God's house in order to enjoy it.

When one takes into consideration the facts in the case, it will be seen that Isaiah was foretelling the time when the kingdom of Christ would be established; or the church of our Lord. The expression "latter days" could refer either to the last days of the Mosiac dispensation, or the age of Christ; but since the reference is specifically to the establishment of the Lord's kingdom, it appears almost certain that the prophet had in mind 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 Daniel 2; 44; Matthew 16: 18; Hebrews 12: 28. The "church" and the "kingdom," when referring to the one over which Christ reigns as king, have reference to one and the same thing. The church emphasizes the *called out* feature, while the kingdom is the governmental aspect, that is, the idea which is stressed by the word kingdom.

If the section of the lesson text which is now under consideration is read in the light of Daniel chapter two it will be seen that the probable idea is that the kingdom of Christ will rise above 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 of the kingdom of Christ, from the passages cited in the preceding paragraph. The expression "and all nations shall flow unto it" has reference to the world-wide aspect of the great commission, and the results which would follow its execution. The kingdom of Christ is not for just one people, but for all nations. (Cf. Mark 16: 15; Matt. 28: 19; Acts 15: 13-18; Col. 1: 23.) This worldwide proclamation of the gospel is an essential step in the pathway toward world peace. The "brotherhood of men" must become a reality, if the nations of the earth are to live together in peace.

Attention has already been called to the fact that Isaiah and Micah spoke regarding the same great event, and if their predictions are read together, it will be seen that the kingdom of Christ would be in marked contrast with the kingdom of Judah, as portrayed by Micah. "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 by Micah just before his prophecy concerning the kingdom of Christ.

No one can do the will of the Lord until he is taught it; and it is for this reason that the truth concerning the kingdom of Christ must be taught to all men, so that those who desire to enter the kingdom may know the way into it, and those who are in the kingdom will know how to order their lives therein. (Cf. Matt. 28: 18-20; Acts 2: 42.) It is only by the complete subjection of God's will, by all people who profess to follow him, that peace can be brought about. 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, in the following words:

"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 fatling 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: 6-19.)

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 prophecy which has just been quoted; 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.

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 the Lord, they shall turn their instruments of war into instruments of peace. Hastings has pointed out the fact that Christianity has introduced mankind to a new kind of courage; the courage which is shown, not in resisting the enemy, or trying to gain the victory over him; but a love which refuses to regard any man as an enemy, but which seeks to conquer, by patient endurance of every wrong, and even by 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. 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; 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.

If this section of the lesson text, along with the rest of the lesson, is to point to world peace, then we must see in it that which Paul says about God's plan for the human race. It was never Jehovah's intention that any part of the people who owe their very existence to him, should live apart from him, much less that they should fight and devour each other. (Cf. James 4: 1-4.) God has made known his feeling toward his people, and just what his attitude is regarding their eternal destiny. (Cf. 2 Cor. 6: 14-18; 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9.)

The specific part which this section of the lesson text emphasizes regarding 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 inasmuch as the apostle was speaking to people who were totally ignorant of the Scriptures, it was necessary for him to seek another and different approach to their hearts. And this he did 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 upon 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.)

The apostle Paul was actually complimenting the Athenians, when he told them that they were "very religious." 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 the expression, you are "more than others respectful of what is divine." McGarvey translates Paul's words this way, "very demon-fearing," which, of course, was their conception of divinity, since they regarded

demons as proper objects of worship. Their idea of demons was very different from ours, or that of the Jews. The Greeks' desire to reverence higher beings was good, in and of itself; but it was misdirected. It was not Paul's purpose to condemn the noble trait, but rather to guide the sentiment aright by revealing to them the true God, whom they were worshipping in ignorance.

In his effort to lead the Athenian philosophers to a knowledge of the true God, he began with the altar of the inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD; and as Hackett notes, Paul was in effect saying, "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." The apostle Paul was evidently acting on the supposition that if he could enable his hearers to see something of the nature and perfection of the true God, and could induce them to live for him; then there would be a better chance that others could be similarly influenced, and that the world itself could be made a better place in which to live.

The conception which many people of that day had with reference to deity, was that each nation had its own god; but Paul wanted the men to whom he spoke to realize that that was not true with reference to the God of whom he spoke. And so, instead of being the ruler of a single nation, which he defends against other nations, God controls all men of every nation; inasmuch as they are his by right of creation. Jehovah also determined, or fixed, their "appointed seasons," that is, the periods of human history, which he controls, and the "bounds of their habitation," or the boundaries of their dwelling-places. *The New English Bible* renders the passage in these words: "He fixed the epochs of their history and the limits of their territory." God has therefore determined, or determines, the destiny of nations, both as to duration of time and extension in space.

The apostle Paul went on to say that the over-all Divine purpose in the creation of the human race, was

and is that they should seek God. Meyer notes that "the great thought of the passage is simply: God the Author, the Governor, and the End of the world's history: *from* God, *through* God, to God. Paul keeps consistently to his figure. The seeker who comes on his object *touches* and grasps it, and has now in reality *found* it. Hence the meaning without the figure is, *if perchance they might become conscious of God and of their relation to him, and might appropriate this consciousness as a spiritual possession*. Thus they would have understood the guidance of the nations as a revelation of God, and have complied with its holy design in their own case."

When it is said that in God we live, and move, and have our being, the idea is that we are dependent on him for our very existence. The poetic words which Paul quoted are found in the works of Aratus of Cilicia, a poet of the apostle's own province; and also in Cleanthes' *Hymn to Jupiter*. The latter was a Stoic philosopher, and it is very likely that Paul had him in mind, inasmuch as he was speaking to Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, and he referred to the writer in question one of "your own poets."

Paul knew, of course, that the words which he quoted were written of Jupiter, also known as Zeus, his Greek name; but he applied the idea which the poet expressed to the point which he had just made regarding the relationship of men of God. This was the apostle's way of showing the absurdity of idolatry. The people who were listening to Paul knew that human beings are not made of gold, or silver, or stone; and it was therefore absurd to think that the Being from whom they had issued was composed of such materials, which were engraved by art and the device of man.

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 has to do with the controversy among men, regarding the worship which belongs to Jehovah; and any one who is acquainted with the facts in the case, is aware of the many conflicts which have resulted from these misunderstandings, and consequent controversies; with the result that men have not yielded themselves to God and his way of

life. When the people of this world seek God, as he has ordained that they should, and serve him according to his revealed will, there will be no occasion for strife and fightings, such as characterize the world today. This is the only way to certain peace among men; and this truth was demonstrated the early church.

Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of today's lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, places, and persons.

Introduction

Why are the people of today particularly fitted to study and appreciate a lesson like this?

What is absolutely essential before world-wide peace can be experienced?

Discuss the cost, from various points of view, of waging wars.

What are some of the moral and spiritual results of carnal warfare?

Wherein do wars among men and nations generally fail?

What can Christians do toward freeing the world of carnal warfare?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstance did Paul write the words which serve as the golden text?

What relationship does Jesus sustain with reference to world peace?

What special prediction did Isaiah make concerning him with respect to this issue?

To whom has peace been promised by the Lord?

The Basis for World Peace

What did the prophecy of Isaiah (and that of Micah) contain with reference to peace?

Is it possible for this goal to be achieved? Give reasons for your answer.

What did the prophet say that would be established?

Why was the kingdom presented under the figure of a mountain?

What is the relationship which it sustains to other world powers?

When did Isaiah say the kingdom of Christ would be established?

In what way are the church and the kingdom related? Give reasons for your answer.

What is absolutely essential before men

can come to be and do that which God commands?

Who is responsible for this teaching?

What difference is seen in the relationship of people *after* they enter the kingdom of Christ?

What should the Lord's people be careful to do in this respect?

What was the attitude of the early Christians with reference to carnal warfare?

God's Purpose for Man

In what way is this section of the lesson text related to the question of world peace?

What was always God's plan for his people with reference to himself?

How did Paul go about trying to get his point of view over to the philosophers of Athens?

Where was he when he talked with them, and why was he there?

What did the apostle mean by saying that the people to whom he spoke were very religious?

What would be their attitude toward such a remark and why?

What was Paul's over-all aim in discussing their attitude toward the worship of idols?

What was the general viewpoint of people who did not know the Scriptures with reference to God?

What has Jehovah done with reference to the nations of the earth?

What lesson should we learn from this?

Why was Paul's argument in trying to get his hearers to see the truth regarding God?

A Universal Appeal

What relationship does this section of the lesson text have to the subject of world-peace?

What has the controversy over the question of worship done to this general question?

What is the only solution to the controversy?

Lesson X—December 7, 1969

RESPECTING 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 hypocrisy, said unto them. Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius, that I may see it.

16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, 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

- December 1. M.....Obligation to Government (Rom. 13: 1-7)
- December 2. T.....Jesus Taught Submission to Civil Law (Mark 12: 13-17)
- December 3. W.....Respect for Men in Authority (1 Pet. 2: 13-16)
- December 4. T.....Mob Spirit Suppressed by Law (Acts 19: 30-41)
- December 5. F.....Live at Peace (Rom. 12: 16-21)
- December 6. S.....Good Citizenship (1 Pet. 4: 12-19)
- December 7. S.....Christ's Respect for Law (Matt. 5: 13-20)

Time.—A.D. 30-63.

Places.—Jerusalem, Corinth, and Babylon.

Persons.—Jesus, some Pharisees and Herodians; Paul, Peter, and those to whom they wrote.

Introduction

The lesson for today is, generally speaking, one of the neglected subjects among the Lord's people. Too many followers of Christ are satisfied to follow their own thinking, with reference to such matters, rather than to make a sincere effort to determine just what the Bible has to say regarding the question. Or, to state the same thing in another way, 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 that should come to our attention, in a study like this, is that Christianity is always a *unit*; whereas, civil governments may be as different from each other, almost, as daylight is from darkness. (Cf., for example, 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 right and constitutional: they must be subject to the government under which they live, regardless of its character and whether or not they like it.

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 for a nation to be exalted is for the people of the nation, and especially its rulers, to practice that which is just and right. Sin, on the other hand, always has 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 that the exaltation of a nation, in the sense of the golden text, will result in the eternal salvation of the people in question; but the reference is rather to their moral position with reference to 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's 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, that is, the Lord's people, are to have a leaving influence on society in general; it seems that the Lord's people should do everything within their power to make the governments, to which they are subjected, recognize and obey the will of God. But even while doing this, the Lord's people must always keep in mind the fact 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 facts are sufficient to reveal a difference, which should easily show Christians where their allegiance and duty lie. If the argument is made to the effect 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 joint participation in the affairs of state. (Cf. Rom. 12: 21.) The Christian's greatest weapon is earnest prayer and sincere trust in God.

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 his talk. 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? 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 say unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at him.

The enemies of Jesus were determined to condemn him at any cost, and it is amazing that people who follow their example cannot see the sinfulness of their way; but they apparently cannot. And what was true of those who opposed Jesus at the time of this lesson, is still true today of people who possess the same spirit and attitude. The Jewish sects who were opposed to Jesus, at the time of this lesson, were wholly unable to find anything wrong with him (cf. John 8: 46) and it was their plan to get him to say something which they could seize upon, and 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.) J. W. McGarvey notes 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; and that, as the text declares, is exactly what the Pharisees and Herodians were attempting to do. It is regrettable that such a despicable spirit did not die with the people of the day; but, as any careful observer knows, it did not.

It is, of course, possible for one to speak the truth in a hypocritical manner; and that is precisely what the enemies of Jesus did, when they approached him at the time of this lesson. Some one has said that the devil himself never lies so foully, as when he speaks the truth; and it is easy to see that his emissaries evidently thought that they had a plan, that is, a trap, from which their victim could not extricate himself; but in that, as we shall presently see, they were greatly mistaken.

The scheme of the men who were sent to entrap Jesus was carefully designed. Their plan was to ask him a question as if to settle a dispute which had arisen between the Pharisees and the Herodians, who were themselves opposed to each other, regarding the paying of taxes to the Roman government. This was probably the only way that two opposing groups could, or would, unite in their efforts to ensnare Jesus. They had no love for each other; but if they could, by their joint efforts, destroy Jesus, they were willing to forget their differences for the time being.

And so, when they came to Jesus with their "carefully laid plan," they had this understanding: If his answer with reference to paying taxes to Caesar should be in the negative, then the Herodians, who supported the Roman government, would report the matter to the gov-

ernor. (Luke 23: 2.) But if the answer of Jesus should be in the affirmative, then that would give the Pharisees a chance to report to the Jews 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 to stir up the multitudes against him. (Cf. Deut. 17: 14, 15.)

The term "Caesar" became the title for the emperor of Rome, due to the fact that the first such ruler was Julius Caesar; and his name or title was passed on to, and was worn by, his successors. The rulers of Egypt were called "Pharaoh"; or, to express the same thing in another way, the word *Pharaoh* became a title for the rulers of that country. 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 its being allowed by the law of Moses. Josephus tells of Judas of Galilee raising a revolt on this account, and saying that such taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery. (Cf. Acts 5: 37; Luke 2: 1ff.)

If the men who came for the purpose of entrapping Jesus had not been so calloused, they would have been greatly ashamed when Jesus made them understand that he was well aware of their hypocrisy; but their aim was to destroy him, and they therefore lost sight of everything else. But instead of being entangled himself, Jesus placed the principal actors in the conspiracy in a position, in which they could have a part in setting forth the truth regarding the question which they had asked him. The "denarius" (an anglicized Greek term) was a Roman silver coin, which was normally worth in the neighborhood of seventeen cents, and was the amount which was paid for a day's work to an average laborer. (See Matt. 20: 2; cf. 18: 28.)

The answer which Jesus gave to their question—"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's"—sets forth the true significance of our twofold relationship with reference to God and the powers that be. Each has a claim on us; and we

cannot be the kind of followers of Christ, which we ought to be, without discharging both of these responsibilities. There would have been no cause for astonishment on the part of the enemies of Jesus, at the time of this lesson, if they had been trying to do right themselves.

God, His People, 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. 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, an avenger of wrath for him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause ye pay 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.

It is exceedingly doubtful if there is another statement, even in the Bible itself, which gives a clearer view of the relationship which Christians sustain to civil governments, as well as to the manner in which they came to be. God himself ordained them, and he specifically commands that his people be subject to them. The term "subjection" should be carefully noted; for the Lord tells his people to be subject to, not a participant in, the governments under which they live. There is, in fact, not a single precept, example, nor necessary inference in all the New Testament, to guide the Lord's people in anything with reference to human governments, other than to be obedient to them, except when they conflict

with their loyalty to the Lord. (Cf. Acts 4: 18-20; 5: 29.)

No one can read the New Testament for what it says, without being impressed with the fact that the general 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 naturally 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? This appears to be a fair question, and regardless of which side of the issue 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.

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 deals with subjection to rather than participation in civil government. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; 2 Pet. 1: 3, 4.) On the other hand, there is not a duty which the Lord requires Christians to discharge, toward the government under which he lives, that cannot be fulfilled in their way.

Furthermore, God's attitude toward human governments may also be seen by considering such passages of scripture as Dan. 4: 17; Jer. 27: 5-11; 51: 20-24; Isa. 10: 5-11. (Cf. Psalm 76: 10; Isa. 44: 28; 45: 1, 5-7.) Human government therefore, without realizing that they are serving Jehovah, are used by him in accomplishing his purposes here upon the earth. God raises up and casts down human governments and rulers.

Thus, not only does God use human rulers and civil governments to accomplish his will with reference to other such rulers and governments; but they are also employed as means for the punishment of sinful and disobedient individuals. The section of the lesson text we are now considering contains one

of the clearest statements on record regarding capital punishment; but it should always be kept in mind that that is a function of the state, and not that of individuals or the church. It is true that such responsibility is often misused and 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 supreme penalty for capital offenses. 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 will likely be misinterpreted.

Jehovah made it very clear, during the age of Moses, that both the civil and religious aspects of his law were to be administered by his people as a *theocracy*; that is, the "church" and the "state" were united, during that period. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the administration of the entire law of Moses, both civil and religious, was in the hand of people who were in covenant relationship with God. But in this age of the world, there is a separation of church and state. Wherever the civil rulers and the Lord's people are mentioned together in the New Testament, there is always a contrast between them. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6-8; 6: 4-6.)

To sum up the issue now before us, let it be observed that there is not a single reference in the entire New Testament which states, or even implies, that a single child of God in Christ was ever charged, by divine authority, with the administration of the affairs of any civil government. Such matters were always found, in New Testament times, in the hands of those who were not in covenant relation with the Lord, as may be gathered from the scriptures just cited. Christians are taught to *obey* civil governments, rather than to *rule* in and through them. The work of the state and of the church both belong to God, but the members of each group have a separate sphere in which to function. God has something for the civil government to do, and something for the church to do; but the obligation of the *individual* depends upon *where* he is. Even in civil governments there are those in

various departments, and the duty of each person will be determined by where he happens to be. If he is in the State Department, he will likely be charged with diplomacy; but if he is a member of the Department of Defense, he will probably be concerned with force. There is, of course, nothing inconsistent in the government's having both departments, with their different manner and means of carrying out the government's wishes, or meeting its needs; and neither is there anything inconsistent with God's working through both the church and the governments of the world, which are, as has already been pointed out, entirely different institutions for the accomplishment of his purposes. (Cf. John 18: 36; 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12.)

It is the duty of Christian people therefore to support the government, under which they live, both by their obedient conduct, and by their taxes. The faithful child of God will obey, not primarily out of fear of being punished, but because it is with him a matter of conscience. He will, with this kind of an attitude, render to all people their due.

The Process at Work

(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, sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God.

Christian people are expected to maintain 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 con-

trary to God's law for his people, they must respectfully decline to obey the earthly rulers in that respect, and must, of course, always be willing to suffer whatever punishment the powers that be may see fit to inflict upon them. The section of the lesson text now under consideration was written by the inspired apostle Peter, and that is exactly what he said about the matter, under similar circumstances, as has already been pointed out. (See again Acts 4: 18-20; 5: 27-29; cf. Dan. 3: 1-30; 6: 1-28.)

Peter's statement in this portion of the lesson text is in complete harmony with that which Paul teaches in the preceding section. The apostle Paul also said, "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving, 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 person, 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: 17-21.) Both Paul and Peter tell us that God uses civil rulers to execute vengeance; and it is therefore the right and the privilege of the Christian to call upon the powers that be for help when it is needed. (Cf. Acts 23: 12-24; 25: 6-12.) Civil governments not only execute vengeance, they also praise them that do well. And so, regardless of that which the government may or may not do, the best possible thing that the Christian can do is to set a good example of godly living at all times.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why, in your opinion, isn't more teaching done on this subject by Christians today?
Why does the question have such a wide application?
What is the Christian attitude toward civil governments?

The Golden Text

In what sense does righteousness exalt a nation?
What truth must the child of God always keep before him with reference to his allegiance?
What is the principal difference between the kingdom of Christ and those of the world?

Both God and Caesar Must Be Respected
What was the motive behind the attack

which the Pharisees and Herodians made on Jesus?
 Why did they choose such a despicable method?
 What use did they make of the truth on that occasion and what lesson should we learn from it?
 Who were the Pharisees and the Herodians and how did they feel toward each other?
 Why, then, did they team up for their effort to entrap Jesus?
 What was the nature of the success which they hoped to achieve?
 Who was Caesar and what belonged to him?
 In what way did Jesus turn the tide on his enemies?
 What was the significance of the answer which he gave them?

God, His People, and the Powers That Be
 Why is this passage of scripture so important to us?
 What emphasis did Paul place on that which he said in the passage?
 In what way are the kingdom of Christ and civil governments related?

What is the relationship which Christians should sustain with reference to them?
 Where alone can we find the Lord's will for his people in this respect?
 What use does Jehovah make with regard to the governments of men?
 How do they feel regarding such matters?
 How do the Lord's people usually feel with reference to those things?
 What does the New Testament teach with reference to capital punishment? Give reasons for your answer.
 In what way does the Lord's government differ now from the Old Testament period and why?
 What, then, is the very best thing which Christians can do today?

The Process at Work

What does Peter tell Christians to do with reference to civil governments?
 What are they to do when a choice must be made regarding them and the Lord?
 What relationship is seen between the teaching of Paul and Peter on this subject?
 What should the child of God do with reference to wrongdoing?

Lesson XI—December 14, 1969

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

Lesson Text

Eph. 6: 5-9; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19; Matt. 7: 1-5

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 eyeservice, 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;

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.

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” (Luke 6: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 24: 14, 15.

Daily Bible Readings

December 8.	M.....	Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19: 12-26)
December 9.	T.....	Oppression of Poor Forbidden (Deut. 24: 10-18)
December 10.	W.....	Injustice Offensive to God (Amos 5: 6-15)
December 11.	T.....	An Ungrateful Servant (Matt. 18: 23-30)
December 12.	F.....	Should Render Service (Eph. 6: 5-9)
December 13.	S.....	Christ Master of All (Rom. 14: 1-12)
December 14.	S.....	Christian Responsibility (Rom. 12: 9-18)

Time.—A.D. 27-67.

Places.—Rome, Philippi, and mount Hattin.

Persons.—Paul and those to whom he wrote; Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

Introduction

The term "business," as used in this lesson, is the work or activity, in which people are engaged in earning a livelihood, and so that they will have the means with which they can accomplish and obtain that which they desire in this life. God ordained work for his people from the very beginning. "And Jehovah God took the man, and put him 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 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 relationship with others, with references to the work in which they are engaged. There are very few people who can live wholly independent lives in this respect. This relationship, for the most part, is known as the employer-employee relationship; and that is the place where the emphasis of our lesson for today should be placed. It is both right and necessary for all who are physically and mentally able to

work, or, which is the same thing, to be engaged in some kind of worthy and gainful occupation, regardless of their attitude toward the Lord; but there is an added responsibility for those who are Christians. They are following the Lord Jesus Christ; and the religion which he ordained must influence all areas of their lives, including that of their business relationships.

Work, like many of the other relationships 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 order just here. There has come down through the years, on the one hand, an aristocratic attitude toward work. A "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 upon labor. This was especially true in the "old world" before this country was settled; but any thoughtful person knows that this country is not entirely free from that attitude and practice.

However, when this country 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

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. But even at that, the attitude toward the daily laborer is not as wholesome, on the part of every one, as it should be. The facts of

history make it quite evident that Christianity began as a religion of working people, and it has always recognized the true 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 govern people in all their relationships with others, that was ever spoken here upon the earth. If this rule which was announced by Jesus were put into practice everywhere, the results which would follow would stagger the imagination.

Jesus was the only person who was a living embodiment of the Golden Rule; but any one who realizes what the spirit of Christianity is, 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 the application of the Golden Rule 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. The Lord's purpose is 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 menpleasers; 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 threatenings: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

The relationship which is described in the section of the lesson

text just quoted no longer exists in civilized countries, but the principle of mutual responsibility which is set forth therein, is still entirely applicable to our time, that is, the mutual responsibility between employer and employee. A "servant," literally a *bondservant*, when Paul penned the words now before us, meant that which we mean by "slave"; and the slaves of that day were of many kinds and classifications, as, for example, those who worked in the fields, in the houses, artisans, craftsmen, clerks, tutors, nurses who cared for 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. These men and women were the property of their owners; and it was often true that the slave was superior to his master in intellectual ability.

But the slaves in the days of Paul, regardless of their moral, mental, and physical ability, had a moral and spiritual obligation to their masters, especially those who were members of the body of Christ. The apostle Peter, in writing on this question, says, "Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear: not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. 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 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.) Masters were not always the kind of people they should have been; but God's people who were slaves, were everywhere exhorted to do the right thing, regardless of the character and conduct of their masters.

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 the lesson text now under consideration, and the quotation from Peter, in the preceding paragraph. 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 obligations toward those for whom they work.

Some one has pointed out that it was more difficult to be a Christian master, than it was to be a Christian servant; and it appears that that same difficulty is present in the more tolerable relationship 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 in 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 with less energy. Not every person can say with Dr. Arnold, that the noblest sight on earth 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, that the others did, if he, like the other two, had done the best that he could; but the sad story is that he did not do that which he was capable of doing. However, we gather from the judgment scene which follows the parable of the talents (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 the New Testament period, 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 power of the gospel, and the principles which characterize it, to the effect that all men are brethren in Christ, and alike servants of one heavenly Master, to destroy the whole institution; and that, as every informed person knows, is exactly what happened. 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 influences their lives, their efforts will be more productive, and they will be happier; for no one, under such circumstances, would try to take undue advantage over another. Hastings, in commenting on this section of the lesson text, says 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 it is to rule them with the hand of authority.

It is also 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 slavery 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 a soul to put into it; and we should remember that 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 highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.

If nothing else were 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 possession. 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 this narrative, namely, that of the rich fool (Luke 12: 13-21); the rich man who went to Hades (Luke 16: 19-31); and the rich young ruler (Luke 18: 18-24); and it is interesting to note

that each of them failed in exactly the same way. There is no implication whatsoever 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.)

Charles Foster Kent has pointed out that Jesus not only appreciated wealth, rightly acquired; but also gave instruction regarding the proper ways for using it. It should be noted, however, that the Lord usually laid down principles, rather than specific laws; and then leaves the individual Christian to apply them in keeping with the circumstances which may surround him. The Lord taught that if a man allows the quest of wealth to become his master, or ruling passion, then he becomes an abject slave, and is subject to the most cruel of tyrants. But if the man in search of riches regards his wealth as a servant, and uses it to minister to his eternal interests, and those of society in general, he not only will be blessed himself; but will also glorify God, which is, of course, the highest achievement possible for him.

Kent further says, "The wise administration of wealth as a social trust in itself also contains great po-

tentiality 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 faces 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 Teaching of the Prophets and Jesus*, p. 234.)

The Censorious Spirit Has No Place in Christianity

(Matt. 7: 1-5)

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considered not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

It is easy for one person to pass judgment on others; but before such a person is condemned as a flagrant sinner, his accuser should make an effort to learn something of the circumstances surrounding his action, and the motive which prompted him to pass the judgment in question. Certainly not all judgment is sinful, as may be seen by the following statement by Jesus: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7: 24.) There are times when the Lord's people should speak up and register a protest and let wrongdoers know that we do not appreciate that which they are saying and doing. (Cf. 1 Tim. 1: 3, 4, 18-20; 6: 3-5; 2 Tim. 2: 16-18; 4: 14, 15.)

It is easy to see from the context that Jesus was telling his hearers that they should not engage in self-righteous, loveless, and censorious judgment. (Cf. Luke 6: 27-38.) The

Lord's prohibition is against the practice of ill-natured criticism, hasty and half-formed opinions, the open or unconscious assertion of our own superiority, the malicious whippers, and the cruel sneers, which do so much harm in everyday relationships of human life.

But it is very clear, as has already been suggested, that Jesus does not forbid our seeing the faults of others, and even disapproving them; but, having condemned the evil in our fellow men, it should be our earnest desire to try to turn them into paths of righteousness. (Cf. Gal. 6: 1, 2; James 5: 19, 20.) There are too many people who criticize others, and are content to leave them just where they found them, that is, they want to condemn them, but they are not interested in trying to get them to do better. An attitude of this kind not only does not do any good, but it can, and often does, result in a great amount of harm.

And so, with these things in mind, in what way is the section of the lesson text which we are now considering applicable to the over-all subject now before us? Or what has this to do with our following Christ in the business world? Most people partake of the ways of the world in which they live, or, more specifically, with the practices of the age of which they are apart. And since there is so much criticism and condemnation of others, it is easy for both the employer and the employee to fall into the same habit. It is not usually very difficult for either to find fault with the other; but each should make an effort to be certain that what he says and does in this respect is in keeping with the teaching of Jesus regarding the question of judging.

Christians may be either the employers or the employees, or both, and they will frequently have the opportunity of saying or doing something, which will probably lead their associates, whether employers or employees, to see what the way of Christ is, and its superior benefits to all who follow it. If either the Christian employer or the Christian employee sees some wrong, or something which he considers to be wrong in the other, he should take whatever steps, which are open to

him, to make the matter known to the person in question; but he should refrain from saying or doing anything which will be in violation of the teaching of Christ, in the section of the lesson text now before us. And even if the employee is a member of a labor union, he should still see to it that his personal attitude and action is in keeping with the spirit of Christ. No child of God, in any relationship, is at lib-

erty to run counter to the teaching of the Lord regarding any question whatsoever. Many of the early Christians were themselves slaves, and much of the teaching which is contained in the New Testament regarding the question we are now considering, was addressed to them; and it is easy to see that they were never encouraged to violate, in any way, the basic teaching of the Lord. (Cf. Phil. 8: 22.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

In what sense is the term "business" used in this lesson?
What has the Lord ordained for the people of the earth regarding work?
Why is a lesson like this one needed for Christian people today?
What is the usual relationship which exists among people in the business world today?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text spoken?
What is involved in that which we speak of as the Golden Rule?
What should be our daily attitude and endeavor toward that way of life?
What are some of the problems which the practice of the Golden Rule tend to solve?
Where do many people try to begin with the application of the rule?
What was the Lord's purpose in giving his divine revelation?

Mutual Responsibilities

In what way is the truth contained in the section of the lesson text applicable to us?
What was the relationship between master and slave in New Testament times?
In what way has that relationship been changed, so far as we are concerned?
What moral and spiritual responsibility did slaves owe to their masters?
What is the moral and spiritual responsibility which employees owe to their employers?
What complication is sometimes seen in the present-day employer-employee relationship?
Why is it sometimes more difficult for the

employer to manifest the spirit of Christ?

Why didn't the New Testament writers attack the system of slavery?
In what way was the system eventually brought to an end?

What is the very best way to follow Christ in the business world today?

A Charge to the Rich

Is it wrong for a Christian to be rich?
Give reasons for your answer.
What two things should the Christian wealthy man always consider?
What do we learn from the Book of Luke regarding rich men and their wealth?
What does Jesus teach with reference to the use of riches?
How can one lay up treasures in heaven by means of his worldly possessions?
In what way does our complex society aid one in this respect?
How is this subject related to the question of character development?

The Censorious Spirit Has No Place in Christianity

What kind of judging does Jesus specifically condemn?
Under what circumstances is it proper and right for one to judge another?
What should always be the attitude and purpose of Christians when they judge someone else?
In what way is this section of the lesson text applicable to the subject now before us?
What is the practice of judging others so common in our day?
How should the Christian employer or employee go about judging or condemning another?
What should his over-all purpose be in this matter?
What effect should membership in a labor union have in a case like this?

Lesson XII—December 21, 1969

MEETING TEMPTATION

Lesson Text

2 Cor. 6: 17, 18; Eph. 5: 11-18; 1 John 2: 15-17

17 Wherefore
 Come ye out from among them,
 and be ye separate,
 saith the Lord,
 And touch no unclean thing;
 And I will receive you,
 18 And will be to you a Father,
 And ye shall be to me sons and
 daughters.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them;

12 For the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of.

13 But all things when they are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light.

14 Wherefore *he saith*. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

15 Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;
 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

18 And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Golden Text.—“*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*” (Rom. 12: 21.)

Devotional Reading.—James 4: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

- December 15. M..... How to Meet Temptation (Matt. 4: 1-11)
- December 16. T..... The Victory of Faith (1 John 5: 1-5)
- December 17. W.The Accuser Cast Down (Rev. 12: 7-12)
- December 18. T.....No Temptation Irresistible (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)
- December 19. F.Victory Over Self (Mark 14: 32-42)
- December 20. S.....Daniel’s Victory (Dan. 1: 8-16)
- December 21. S.....Help from on High (1 John 2: 1-4)

Time.—A.D. 57-90.

Places.—Somewhere in Macedonia, Rome, and Ephesus.

Persons.—Paul, John, and those to whom they wrote.

Introduction

The problem of temptation is common to all responsible people. It was originated in the garden of Eden, and no righteous person, from that day until this, has been passed up by the tempter. Soon after our Lord’s baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, and before he entered upon his public ministry among the people of his day, he was led by the Spirit into a place where he was subjected to every kind of temptation which the devil could devise.

Luke, after recording the facts of the temptation of Jesus, says, “And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.” (Luke 4: 13.) Moses, in recording the facts regarding the devil’s temptation of Eve in the garden of Eden, says that three things appealed to her, namely, “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: 6.)

When the apostle John wrote the first epistle, which bears his name, he said, regarding the things which appeal to people, and which tend to draw them away from God, that they consist in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vain glory of life; and if one will compare that statement with the records of the temptation of Eve and Jesus, it will not be difficult for him to see a striking similarity in all three of them. With this in mind, we may conclude that the temptations which seek to alienate people from God, may be listed under the three headings which John names: (1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust of the eyes, and (3) the vainglory of life. This is not because the world was evil when God created it, but because Satan succeeded in getting it under his control. The apostle John says in this same letter, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one." (1 John 5: 19.) As long as this condition prevails, temptation will be employed to lead as many astray as possible.

The Golden Text

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." The words just quoted are taken from the hortatory section of the Book of Romans, and they contain both a warning, and an encouragement to resistance. They assume, as indeed the entire Bible does, that there is such a thing as evil, that contact with it is inevitable, and that ruin and defeat by it are not impossible. Evil is all about us, even, to some extent, in the best of us; and the solemn truth is that we must overcome it, or be overcome by it. There is no such thing as peaceful coexistence with evil. Evil meets us every day, and it must be met and vanquished every day, or it will destroy us. Sometime it comes suddenly and forcefully upon us, taking us by surprise; and sometimes it works steadily and persistently, wearying us into compliance. Sometimes it works through our passions and lusts, and sometimes through our constitutional infirmities; it varies its methods, and is

The original word from which we have "temptation" is frequently found in the New Testament; but if one will examine the various contexts in which it occurs, it will not be difficult for him to see that the exact shade of meaning is not always the same. The word sometimes carries with it the idea of seduction, or an inducement to sin. Temptation in this sense may arise, either from one's inward desires, from outward circumstances, or from both together. (Cf. James 1: 14; 1 Tim. 6: 9; Luke 4: 13; 8: 13; Josh. 7: 19-21.) But when James 1: 13 is taken into consideration, it is obvious that a meaning is attached to the word there, which is different from that which Jesus had in mind in Matthew 6: 13. The original word is also used in the sense of making trial of God. This is done by rebellious men who, as it were, endeavor to put the Lord's power and justice to the test, and challenge them to show themselves. (See Heb. 3: 8, 9; cf. Deut. 6: 16.) And finally, the word is frequently used in the sense of trying or testing one's fidelity, integrity, character, etc. (Cf. James 1: 2, 12; 1 Pet. 1: 6, 7; Rev. 3: 10.)

different in its workings with different people—even different in the same people at different times, and under different circumstances. But regardless of the time and manner of the attack, we know that the conflict with evil is a struggle for life.

The particular point which Paul was discussing, when he penned the words of the golden text for today, was an exhortation not to give way to the desire for revenge. The full context of the statement will better enable us to see the idea which Paul wanted the Roman brethren to get. "Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be

not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12: 17-21; cf. 2 Kings 6: 20-23.)

But the spirit of revenge is not the only evil which Paul warns against; and we do the text no violence when we extend the application of the principle here indicated, to include all forms of evil. The root meaning of "evil" is unregulated desire; and desire is that quality in men which corresponds to gravitation in physical bodies. If all is well with us, desire will keep us moving around our true center—God; but if desire is concentrated upon some object apart from God, the result is sin. (James 1: 13-16.) What destruction would be wrought, if the planets could get detached from their true orbit! The most powerful and successful opposition

which we can register against evil is personal, positive, and constructive good. This enemy of all mankind cannot be overcome by legislation and talk; the only means at our command for certain victory, is practical righteousness. It is difficult for evil to survive in the face of superior character, righteous action, and benevolent institutions. We should not hesitate to destroy a weed; but our motive in doing so, should be to prevent it from smothering, or otherwise damaging, the golden grain. The destruction of evil therefore is not enough; we must overcome evil with good, and for the purpose of producing good. This is sometimes a slow process, or even an expensive method; but it is the only effectual one.

The Text Explained

Intimate Friendship with Evil Is Forbidden

(2 Cor. 6: 17, 18)

Wherefore

*Come ye out from among them,
and be ye separate,*

saieth the Lord,

And touch no unclean thing;

And I will receive you,

And will be to you a Father,

And ye shall be to me sons and daughters.

There are substantial reasons for thinking that Second Corinthians is a composite letter, that is a collection of two or more short epistles, which Paul wrote. There is no question about the authorship and inspiration regarding the contents of the letter in question: only the probability that those who collected the epistles of Paul, which was done many years after his death, and put them into book form, simply took two or more of his shorter epistles and arranged them so that they would be more in keeping with First Corinthians, that is, so far as the length of the epistles was concerned. If this is true, then a recognition of the arrangement will enable one to have a better understanding of that which Paul was endeavoring to get over to the Corinthians.

Any thoughtful Bible student who reads the sixth and seventh chapters of 2 Corinthians, will have no difficulty in seeing that the portion—6:

14-7: 1—is not directly connected with the part which comes before, and the part which follows. If one begins his reading with the 11th verse of chapter 6, skips verses 14: 7: 1, and resumes his reading at verse 2 of chapter 7, he can easily see that there is a much closer relationship between 6: 11-13 and 7: 2; than there is between the passages just mentioned and verses 6: 14-7: 1. Beginning at verse 11, we read: "Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections. Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged. . . . Open your hearts to us: we wronged no man . . . I say it not to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die together and live together." (2 Cor. 6: 11-13 and 7: 2, 3.)

Now, any one who reads the intervening verses, can easily see that they are on an entirely different subject: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in

them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore

Come ye out from among them,
and be ye separate,
saith the Lord,
And touch no unclean thing;
And I will receive you,
And will be to you a Father,
And ye shall be to me sons and
daughters, saith the Lord Al-
mighty."

It is easy for one to see that the apostle is trying to get the Lord's people to realize that there must be a separation between the followers of Christ, and those of the evil one. Paul told the Corinthians, in an earlier letter, that he had previously written to them regarding fellowship with evildoers. "I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world; but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no not to eat." (1 Cor. 5: 9-11.)

If one will look at the two passages just quoted together, it will not be difficult for him to see that here are two statements by the apostle Paul on precisely the same subject, and capable of exactly the same misinterpretation. It is altogether possible, therefore, that 2 Corinthians 6: 14-7: 1 is at least a fragment of Paul's so-called "lost letter" to the Corinthians, referred to in 1 Corinthians 5: 9-11. But be that as it may, the lesson is clear in both passages, namely, the Lord's people must have no Christian fellowship with sinful people; and if we will heed his warning, it will be much easier for us to meet whatever temptations which may come our way.

The Contrast between Light and Darkness

(Eph. 5: 11-18)

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in

secret it is a shame even to speak of. But all things when they are re-proved are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

The preceding ten verses of the chapter, from which this portion of the lesson text is taken, should be carefully read at this time. Christian people are the children of God, and it was through the sacrifice of Christ that they enjoy that privilege. But inasmuch as Christ died for our sins, it follows that no one who partakes of the ways of sin can be pleasing to God, or can enter into or remain in his fellowship; and it is for this reason, that every child of God should do those things which are pleasing to the Father. The entire context employs the metaphors of light and darkness, to emphasize the difference between Christianity and the ways of the world. No one can read and study the things which Paul wrote, without being able to see his duty more clearly.

It should be apparent to any thoughtful reader that the apostle Paul is not speaking of light as a form of intellectual enlightenment, but rather as a way of life—a way in which all the followers of Christ should walk. The sins of the world are the very antithesis of Christianity; and it is amazing to note the number of the Lord's people, or at least those who claim to be, are found walking in the bypaths of worldliness. It is said that Napoleon once said that he deliberately excluded from his mind all thoughts of God, and the invisible things which belong to righteousness; and that it was only by following that course that he was able to accomplish that which he was able to do. And one is led to wonder if that is not the principle which actuates many professed followers of Christ, and makes it possible for them to gratify their cravings for pleasure, money, and so many other things of the world.

Such people are, to some degree at least, asleep; and they need to be awakened. This process is mentioned under two related symbols, namely, (1) reprove, or, as the marginal note has it, convict them of

their wrongdoing. And this, in turn, is accomplished by exposing the works of darkness to the light. Jesus, in commenting on this principle, said, "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." (John 3: 19-21.)

And (2) those who are characterized by spiritual stupor are called upon to bring into action their remaining will-power, and do something about their own condition. When John was writing the letters to the seven churches in Asia, he was directed by the Lord to say to the church in Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and' repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Rev. 3: 1-3.)

Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit. The passage just quoted is rendered by Moffatt in these words: "Be strictly careful then about the life you lead; act like sensible men, not like thoughtless; make the very most of your time, for these are evil days. So do not be senseless, but understand what is the Lord's will; and never get drunk with wine—that means profligacy—but be filled with the Spirit." Some one has noted that it is a serious thing for one to live the Christian life; and we all know that one must be on guard at all times, if he is to be successful in his undertaking. But if one is willing to do his best, he can always

count on the Lord for help. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13; James 2: 5-8.)

The marginal note for "redeeming the time" is *buying up the opportunity*; and its practical meaning may be likened to a merchant who passes through markets, in search of some valuable commodity; and eagerly buying it up wherever it is available. It also reminds one of the Lord's parable of the merchant who was seeking for goodly pearls; and adopting that metaphor here, we may think of the hours of every day as a string of beautiful and costly pearls, each to be prized and treasured for its intrinsic worth. The Christian, if he is to be a successful merchant in this respect, must always be watching for the opportunity of acquiring this priceless commodity, and must ever resolve to turn it to its very best use.

The Christian Attitude toward the World

(1 John 2: 15-17)

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

It is doubtful if anyone can be successful in overcoming temptations, if he does not have the proper attitude toward the world. The writer of the passage just quoted, the apostle John, tells us just how we should feel toward the world; and if we will take his advice, along with that which James says in the following passage, it is doubtful if we will go very far astray, with reference to the world. "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.) These two inspired statements from John and James should enable us to have a clear idea of just how we should feel toward the sinful world in which we live. Any thoughtful person knows that the apostles were not writing about the material world, which is a part of

God's creation. It is the world for which Jesus died (cf. John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8), and which seeks to lure people away from God, otherwise known as worldliness. It may be described as those worldly affairs, such as endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, and such like, which stir up desires, seduce from God, and are obstacles in the way of faithful service to Christ.

The thoughtful Christian can easily see that what has been said is much broader and more comprehensive, than the usual definition of worldliness which is so often heard, namely, the indulgence in popular amusements, such as card-playing, dancing, mixed bathing, and indiscriminate attendance at moving picture shows. While the practices just mentioned do not appeal to well-informed and devoted Christians, because they have nothing in them to commend one to Christ, it will still have to be admitted that such a definition of the question in hand, is far short of the New Testament conception of worldliness. Worldliness, as the Scriptures conceive of it, does not consist solely in being in certain places, and in doing certain things. It is, rather, a view of, or an attitude toward, life, a state of mind. (Cf. Rom. 12: 1, 2; Phil. 3: 17-19—"who mind earthly things.") The original word for "mind" is *phrono*; and it means, according to Thayer, Arndt-Gingrich, and other Greek scholars, to set one's mind on, be intent on, to pursue those things which gratify the flesh. (Cf. Rom. 8: 5-8, where the same original word is found.)

The sum-total of worldliness is expressed in these words: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglorious life, is not of the

Father, but is of the world." (Cf. Gen. 3: 6; Luke 4: 1-13.) And John also says, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." This definition of worldliness, along with the contrast it presents with God, offers the Christian a clear choice, namely, whom shall he follow, Christ or the world?

The practical lesson before us is concerned with those attitudes toward a way of life, and those practices which tend to draw people away from God. Paul, apparently, alludes to such things in the following statement: "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: but refuse profane and old wives' fables. And exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. These things command and teach." (1 Tim. 4: 6-11.)

If the child of God wants to meet temptations successfully, then he must commit his way to Christ, and have as his daily aim the pleasing of God. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 9, 10.) The Lord's people should always be found trying to "make it as sure as ye can"; and there is never a time for relaxation in this respect. (Cf. Luke 21: 34-36.)

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

Why is this an important lesson to every responsible person?
What is the method of Satan, as he endeavors to tempt men away from God?
In what does John say that the world has which attract people?
What is the basic meaning of temptation?

The Golden Text

Under what circumstance did Paul write the words of the golden text?

What major proposition does this text, and the entire Bible, assume?
What "evil" must the Christian seek to overcome?

Intimate Friendship with Evil Is Forbidden

What exhortation does Paul give in this section of the lesson text?

What are some of the things from which Christian people should be separated?
What great promises does God make to those people who comply with his will in this respect?

The Contrast between Light and Darkness

Discuss the setting in which this portion of the lesson text is found.

What are some of the unfruitful works of darkness which the Lord's people must avoid?

What is the light which is to be used in exposing sin?

In what sense is light to be thought of as a way of living?

Why is it that many people can engage in so many sinful things?

What are the Lord's people to do when they become involved in sinful practices?

Why do wrongdoers dislike being exposed?

What did Jesus say regarding this question?

How can the sleepers awake from the dead?

What does Paul say regarding the daily walk of the Christian?

Why is it a serious thing for one to live the Christian life?

What can the faithful child of God always count on?

What is the meaning of redeeming the time?

What reason does Paul assign for this practice?

Give a practical illustration of this process.

The Christian Attitude toward the World

Why is one's attitude toward the world essential in overcoming temptation?

How are the Lord's people told to regard the world?

Why is friendship with the world enmity with God?

What, then, is the world, or worldliness, which is to be avoided?

Give a practical and scriptural definition of worldliness.

How can Christian teachers get their brethren to see the evil of worldliness?

What must the child of God always be doing, if he is to be successful in meeting temptation?

Lesson XIII—December 28, 1969**HOPE FOR THE FUTURE****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, longing 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 swallowed 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 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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"In *hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal.*" (Tit. 1: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 14: 1-14.

Daily Bible Readings

December 22.	M.....	Home of the Faithful (John 14: 1-10)
December 23.	T.....	At Home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5: 1-10)
December 24.	W.....	Victory Over Death (1 Cor. 15: 50-58)
December 25.	T.....	Basis of Hope (1 Cor. 15: 12-23)
December 26.	F.....	Paul's Triumphant Hope (2 Tim. 4: 6-8)
December 27.	S.....	Divine Assurance (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)
December 28.	S.....	"We Shall Be Like Him" (1 John 3: 1-6)

Time.—A.D. 57-90.

Places.—Ephesus and somewhere in Macedonia.

Persons.—John, Paul, and those 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 relationship with the term "gape," which describes the opening of the mouth. With these two related ideas in mind, it is easy to get two fairly suggestive pictures, which may help us to get the basic meaning of the word *hope*. One of the pictures 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 being thrilled with interest and excitement.

The other picture is that of a cozy nest of newly hatched birds, with upturned and opened beaks, waiting for the morsels of food, which the mother-bird will bring. These two pictures, when looked upon by the thoughtful, indicate the attitude of those who look and wait, in anticipation of that which the gospel promises the obedient and faithful. 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 represents the true spirit of the Christian life. It is the spirit which finds intenser interest in tomorrow, than in yesterday; and which is lifted out of debility of regret by the grace of a new promise, and which

turns with quenchless and confident anticipation to the dawn of a richer life, which has been made possible by the Lord. It is the spirit which lives in the future, by the future, and 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, or, which is the same thing, 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.

Some one 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, if the entire context is presented. "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 intrusted

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 they are 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 sprang, fixed in eternity.

Alford continues, "Thus, as God is 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. (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 ages ago."

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.

The subject of "eternal life" is one of the great subjects of the Bible, and especially the New Testament; but it is quite evident, from that which has been spoken and written on the subject, that many people do not have a very clear over-all meaning of the question. For example, if one is asked what he understands the expression "eternal life" to mean, he will probably reply by saying that it means a life which will last for ever; or, a life which will never end. That, of course, is true, if one is thinking 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 *eternal life* than its duration. All men, both the good and the bad, have a life, or 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, for example, is eternal, not merely because he will always exist; he will always exist, because of the quality of his being. Therefore, those who expect to enjoy eternal life with the Father in heaven, must understand here and now, that there is more to eternal life than merely eternal existence.

If the people who expect to go to

heaven when this life is over, will focus their attention on the quality of their life, and make certain that they are living according to the principle of "quality," they need not be afraid of what the future holds for them. The apostle Paul, in writing to his son in the gospel, touched on this question, when he said, "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, namely, (1) one which will always endure, and (2) 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, and especially that of wood and earth, do not possess the enduring quality of gold, 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, apart from the question of its quality. When Jesus and the writers of the New Testament discussed the question of 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: 2.) When one is begotten

of the Spirit, by believing the gospel message, a new kind of life is imparted to him; and when he completes his obedience to the gospel, he is delivered into the church, where that life can grow and develop as God ordained that it should. All of this is called the new birth, and the result is that there is a new creature in Christ Jesus. (Cf. John 3: 3-5; Rom. 6: 3, 4; Eph. 2: 1-10; Tit. 3: 4-7; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Col. 3: 9, 10; 1 John 5: 10-13.) Life is imparted to the new being, in the physical realm, before it is delivered into the sphere where it may grow and develop; and the same is true in the spiritual domain.

When it is affirmed therefore that we have eternal life here and now, the emphasis is upon the *quality*, rather than upon its *duration*. The new life which we have in Jesus can no more be destroyed, or come to an end, than can the Lord Jesus Christ himself. (Cf. Col. 3: 4.) We can lose the life which has been imparted to us, so long as we have a conscious existence in the flesh; but it cannot be destroyed or brought to an end. (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 (1 John 2: 25), and the one which serves as the golden text for today's lesson (Tit. 1: 2). We can have eternal life here and now, in promise 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. (Tit. 1: 2.) "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward." (2 John 8.) It is the *duration* of eternal life which is promised for the future, rather than its *quality*. If we maintain the quality, the duration will be our lot in the glory world.

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. 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.

The two sections of the lesson text, this and the following, which are taken from Second Corinthians, are a part of Paul's argument regarding the blessings of the future state of the Christian, in contrast with the sufferings of this life. It will help one to a better understanding of the entire passage, if the last paragraph of chapter 4 is read, before considering that which is said in 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.)

And so, reasons the apostle Paul, whatever happens to the faithful child of God, it works for him more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory (cf. Rom. 8: 28); and if the result of one's affliction is the death of the body (compared in the passage now before us as *taking down a tent*), he has nothing to lose; for God has for him a permanent dwelling, in contrast with the movable tabernacle or tent, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. Some commentators profess to see in this a reference to the Jewish tabernacle, which was replaced by the more durable temple, and that may have been what Paul had in mind as he sought to illustrate his point; but it appears to be more in keeping with the context to view the matter as suggested by Stanley, namely,

"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 occupa-

tion 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." (Quoted by Alford.) 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, that is, the house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens, (cf. Job 4: 21; Eccles. 12: 6; 2 Pet. 3: 11-13.)

Paul's statement in Romans 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 us-ward. 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 Romans 8: 26; and the idea before him seems to be the longing, which gave rise to the groanings, 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, which Paul did not discuss in detail. He simply indicated that he did not want to be found in that condition, but rather desired to have the spiritual body, which God has for his glorified people. (Cf. 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. 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. 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.

It has always been the will of God that the mortal which is in man, will eventually be swallowed up of life; and it is for that reason that he has placed in man the longing, and the consequent groaning, for its accomplishment. Those Christians who are truly spiritual have their minds set on the things which are above, rather than upon the things which are upon the earth. This idea is forcefully expressed by both Paul and John, in the following passages. "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." (Col. 3: 1-4.) "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.)

The "earnest of the Spirit" is the same as the *Spirit as an earnest*: the expressions 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 the acknowledgement that an obligation exists, as, for example, when one makes a "down payment" on an object which he purchased. The "part payment" is considered a kind of pledge that the total amount will be paid, according to the terms of the contract. "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 established 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.)

The confidence which Paul expresses in this part of the lesson text, 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 people, the apostle had every reason to be confident regarding the future. In fact, he made it his aim to have such confidence up to the very end of his life here upon the earth. A short time before his execution, he wrote: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.) 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. (Cf. 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 his 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." (Verses 5-8.) The "elements" which combine to make faith are (1) conviction, and (2) 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 regarding them. (Rom. 10: 17; Heb. 11: 1, 6.)

Verses 9 and 10 are rendered by Phillips in these words: "It is our aim, therefore, to please him, whether we are 'at home' or 'away.' For every one of us will have to stand without pretense before Christ our judge, and we shall be rewarded for what we did when we lived in our bodies, whether it was good or bad." It is, without a doubt, the fact that one must stand alone before God in judgment, which gives rise to the most solemn thought that one can entertain. And the only way that one can hope that his sins will not be remembered against him at that time, is for him to seek for their forgiveness while in this life. (Cf. Heb. 8: 12.) The term "aim" suggests that Paul was always properly motivated, as he lived by faith in the service of the Lord.

These things should enable us to see why Paul attached so much importance to the question of motives. He was convinced that all men must stand in the presence of God, and be judged according to the way they lived while here upon the earth; and with that truth ever before him, he made it his aim to please God. The marginal reading of "make it our aim" is *are ambitious*. (Cf. Rom. 15: 20; 1 Thess. 4: 11, the only other places in the New Testament where the original word is found.) Vincent says that the correct sense of the term is "to prosecute as a point of honor." Paul loved the honorable, and that which he said here was particularly appropriate as he made his defense of his ministry. Or, to say the same thing in another way, that which he said justified his action, and it should have been a warning to those who opposed him;

for when men have such a motive before them, they cannot, for long, remain separated in their teaching

and practice. And when people follow this course, they can always have hope for the future.

Questions for Discussion

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

Introduction

What is the root meaning of the term "hope"?
What are the principal ingredients of hope? Give reasons for your answer.
Why is hope so valuable to one's life while here upon the earth?

The Golden Text

In what context did Paul write the words which serve as the golden text for today's lesson?
Why did God promise eternal life to his people, that is, what motivated the promise?
What was God's purpose in Christ?
What are some of the great propositions which are affirmed in the golden text?

God's Promise to His People

What conclusion must one reach, after reading that which the New Testament says regarding eternal life, with reference to that subject?
What is the general idea which comes into the average person's mind about its meaning?
Why isn't duration of life, that is, an endless life, necessarily desirable?
What element must enter into life before it can become endless? Give reason for your answer.
In what way do people get the *eternal quality* into their lives?
How is all of this related to the new birth which Christ says is essential?
When, then, must one have the eternal quality in his life?

When will the Lord's promise of an eternal duration be fulfilled for the faithful Christian?

The Temporal and the Eternal

Under what conditions did Paul write the Second Corinthian portions of the lesson text?
In what way is it related to the closing part of chapter four?
In what way did the apostle liken one's passing from this life?
What did Paul mean by "groaning"?
What did he mean by the "naked" state and how is it related to the glorified body?

The End in View

What has always been the will of God for his people here upon the earth and why?
What testimony do Paul and John give on this subject?
What is meant by the "earnest of the Spirit"?
What use does the apostle Paul make of the truth thus expressed with reference to God and his people?
What confidence does the apostle express in the lesson now before us?
Why could he always have such confidence and is such possible for us? Why?
What does it mean for one to walk by faith?
What are the ingredients of faith?
What "aim" was always before Paul and how should we feel about it?
Why should one's life always be motivated?
How may one always be certain of hope for the future?